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A HOUSE PARTY



Violette Costabel



=====
GIFT OF
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Miss Violette Costabel
=====

\$1000.00

for the Right Guess

Last spring plans were made by Messrs. Small, Maynard & Company for what may be called a literary "House Party." The idea was suggested by a casual discussion of the earmarks of authorship. What is it that distinguishes the work of one writer from that of another? Is it style or a difference in the point of view? Could you tell who wrote a story if the author's name were not given? The questions were so interesting that it was determined to submit them to the reading public.

Invitations to the "House Party" were extended to the following distinguished authors: THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH, JOHN KENDRICK BANGS, GEORGE W. CABLE, WINSTON CHURCHILL, F. MARION CRAWFORD, MARGARET DELAND, PAUL LEICESTER FORD, JOHN FOX, JR., HAMLIN GARLAND, ROBERT GRANT, JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS, Mrs. BURTON HARRISON, W. D. HOWELLS, SARAH ORNE JEWETT, THOMAS NELSON PAGE, CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS, BERTHA RUNKLE, F. HOPKINSON SMITH, FRANK R. STOCKTON, RUTH McENERY STUART, BOOTH TARKINGTON, OCTAVE THANET, MARK TWAIN, MARY E. WILKINS, OWEN WISTER.

Each author was to contribute one story, the stories to be published anonymously. Readers were then to be invited to guess the authorship; and, to add zest to the contest, it was decided to offer a prize of ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR THE RIGHT GUESS. Twelve of the authors above

named accepted, and each told one story. Their stories are all in this volume, the introduction to each, as well as the general introduction, being by PAUL LEICESTER FORD.

Conditions of the Contest

Follow these directions carefully: After reading the stories, fill out the coupon on the page opposite to this. Write the names of the authors plainly in the spaces designated for that purpose. Write plainly, also, your name and address on the lines below, being careful to give number and full name of street if in a city, or name of county if in a small town.

Detach this coupon, and mail it to Small, Maynard & Company, Boston, Massachusetts, in time for them to receive it not later than Dec. 31, 1901.

If, when all of the guesses are received, only one person has succeeded in guessing the correct authorship of the twelve stories, that person will receive the entire \$1000.00. If, however, more than one person guesses the correct authorship, the thousand dollars will be divided equally among the winners. For instance, if ten correct guesses are received, each one will receive \$100.00. If no correct guess is received, the one guessing nearest to the correct authorship of the twelve stories will receive the \$1000.00 prize, unless two or more come equally nearest, in which case the prize will be equally divided.

One may make as many guesses as desired; but each guess must be on the authorship of all twelve stories, and must be sent in on the coupons provided.

All guesses must be sent in accordance with these directions, and must be delivered not later than Dec. 31, 1901, to the publishers:

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THE BROKEN STORY	
DAWSON'S DILEMMA	
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MOTHER	
THE RED OXEN OF BONVAL	
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A HOUSE PARTY

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A HOUSE PARTY

AN ACCOUNT OF THE
STORIES TOLD AT A GATHERING OF
FAMOUS AMERICAN AUTHORS
THE STORY TELLERS BEING
INTRODUCED BY

PAUL LEICESTER FORD



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A HOUSE PARTY

Stories By

Famous American Authors

A HOUSE PARTY

INTRODUCTION

ALL the guests were cross or yawning or both, and the hostess was almost at the point of suicide.

Yet any one looking in upon them that evening, as they lounged about the fine old library after dinner, would have seen little excuse for either mood. Mrs. Goddard was an experienced *châtelaine*, and had issued her invitations for that house party wittingly. Eligible youths had been invited for the benefit of desirable girls; middle-aged bachelors had been bidden to brighten the hours of doubtful-aged maidens; and grey-haired men in their "anecdorage" had been included to add spice to the gossip of the dowagers. There were multi-brain people for conversation and uni-brain people for golf. There were sedentary people for cards and restless people for picnics. There were strenuous people for croquet and peace-loving people for umpires. It was, in fact, a wonderfully assorted and combined house party.

Nor did the perfection of it reside only in the variety yet harmony of its guests. The house was fine enough and comfortable enough to satisfy the most fastidious, and was neither so small as to be cramped nor so large as to be barn-like. Then, too,

it was neither so filled as to be crowded nor so empty as to be lonesome. There was an admirable stable, with horses and carriages and grooms at the beck and call of whomsoever listeth; and there was a lake, with cranky canoes for those of mental or physical levity, and flat-bottomed boats for those of gravity of mind or body. The cellar was good, and the cook was better. The tennis court was a turf one, and that of the closest and finest. The billiard table had new cushions and the cues were in order. In the library were all the unread standards and the overread contemporaries. Finally, there was not a trace of the usual destroyer of joy,—no serpent in paradise; for it was not even necessary to deny the existence of the mosquito because he was entirely forgotten.

Yet all the guests were cross or yawning or bored, and Mrs. Goddard was at the point of suicide.

The cause of the trouble had begun weeks before and was neither more nor less than a very ordinary August drought, which was brought to a culmination of evil, so Mrs. Goddard had fretted herself into believing, by a special prayer of her own, that a goodly man the previous Sunday. In the present but-one-day assembled house party, he had made an earnest supplication for rain; and, if the "prayers of the wicked" are of "no avail," it can be inferred that Mrs. Goddard's pastor was a man of goodness. Before the service was through it was raining; and, before the house was ready

pouring. All Sunday night it rained, and all day Monday. Some guest asserted that the downpour ceased for a little time just before daybreak on Tuesday; but it was raining again when they assembled for breakfast, and it had not stopped when they separated late that evening. Wednesday it only drizzled; but out-of-doors was nothing but an earnest rivalry between mud and puddles as to which should preponderate, and so every one stayed indoors and discussed what they should do the next day, when it had cleared. Having had a day's rest, it really rained on Thursday,—so hard, in fact, that it could not stop on Friday. On Saturday the sun came out toward nightfall for at least half an hour, and every one turned weather prophet. But on Sunday it was once again raining; and it was still at it when the house party left the dining-room for the library after the evening meal, each one of them looking as if he or she were going to their own execution or would like to go to somebody's else.

It was enough to drive any hostess to despair; and for a moment Mrs. Goddard hesitated whether it was not her duty to yield the convictions of a lifetime, and allow cards and billiards that evening. But, even as she struggled between the duties of conscience and conviviality, a chance remark relieved her from the necessity of deciding.

“Wouldn't it be jolly,” suggested a girl, “if one of these portraits would only step down from its frame, and tell us a story?”

"I've no doubt each could tell us a very interesting one," remarked the host, "if it were but permitted them."

"Well, why not make them?" questioned Mrs. Goddard's cousin.

"What do you mean, Harold?"

"Since they can't tell us their stories, suppose we tell some for them."

"But most of us don't know anything about them," objected some one.

"Then take anything else in the room that so much as reminds one of a story."

"Good!" exclaimed a man.

"It's just what we were needing," joyfully cried Mrs. Goddard. "Now all draw up to the fire, and some one begin."

There was a moment's confusion as the rearrangement was made; and then came a pause, while every one looked at everybody else.

"Now who will tell the first?" asked the hostess.

"I think that is for you to decide," said a guest.

"Very well. Suppose you begin."

"I think it's your duty," suggested some one.

"I could no more tell a story than fly," protested Mrs. Goddard.

"That's true of most novelists," remarked an old bachelor, bitterly.

"If you fail us, some one will use you as an excuse," said one of the guests, warningly.

"Really it isn't in me. Here, Harold, you tell a story for the two of us," Mrs. Goddard begged, appealingly, to her middle-aged cousin. "I know you must have found out something in your work on our genealogy that is worth telling."

Harold Goddard smiled slightly, as he replied, "Yes, I'll tell them the story of great-uncle Jonas, and—"

"Oh, no, we don't want to hear anything about him," hastily interrupted the hostess.

"Very well," assented her cousin, his eyes twinkling. "If you know a better one, you tell it."

"Pshaw! Tell them anything but that. Here, tell them something about grandfather."

"Grandfather," dutifully began the first storyteller, "is present in the form of that portrait hanging over the sofa, and by good luck my cousin has taken something by which there hangs a really good tale."

In fact it's "A FAMILY TRADITION."

A FAMILY TRADITION

“I WANT you all to look at that picture closely, and though the flicker of the firelight makes it difficult to see, I think you can detect a curious roughness about the outline of the figure, much as if the cobbler-artist who painted it, finding his technique insufficient, to make it project itself from the background, had endeavoured to obtain such an effect by actual layers of paint. Look at the right shoulder, above the epaulette and you will perceive what I mean. See how lumpily the paint is laid on?”

“I can't say that I see anything unusual,” remarked some one.

“Then the light comes wrong for you. I'm sure that some of you sit so that you can see to what I refer?”

“Yes, yes, it's very noticeable,” acceded a girl to whom the appeal was made.

“As it will be to you all, when I tell you its nature. Imagine that once that figure was cut from the surrounding canvas by a knife, and that when it was restored, the injury was painted out as well as could be, but inevitably, with a thickness of the paint at that point almost into ridges.”

“Yes. I see now what you mean,” assented the listener.

“Certainly. It's as plain as can be,” said the second one.

“Well, my story has to do with that particular fact, and I am going to leave it to each of you to decide whether the picture was the evil genius or the guardian angel of the gentleman it represents. It was painted by an unknown artist in New York during the summer of 1776, and was intended to depict one Lieutenant Richard Goddard, whose regiment formed part of the forces with which Washington was holding the city. Why he chose the particular moment of war’s alarms to have himself painted, I cannot say, but there are two horns to the dilemma, and you are welcome to either, or both. The first explanation is that he had but just received his commission, and doubtless was so proud of his new uniform that the temptation to have a counterfeit presentment of himself made was irresistible. The second is that between guard duty and intrenching he found time, or, perhaps, as better befitted his calling, killed it, by becoming deeply enamoured with his cousin, Phillis Goelet, and it may have been that it was painted at her behest, or, at least, in the hope that it would find a favour in her eyes, which, if family tradition is to be trusted, the original was slow to achieve. We know for certain that the actual sittings took place at Fairview, her father’s home, overlooking the East River, and about two miles from New York—that is—from Wall Street—though the city then straggled almost a mile farther north. The Captain had been asked by his kinspeople to make his home with them, and he, and I suspect, all the

other young officers, were with them as much as their military duties allowed; and here on the lawn the portrait was limned, with the old house as a background. One can picture the scene as he posed and the artist painted, and, to judge from his expression, Miss Phillis is either saying something teasing to him, or else some one of the officers is uttering some piece of gallantry to her. Or do you think it was merely too early in the season for melons?"

"Harold, how absurd! Grandfather was always very careful what he ate."

"At seventy-nine, yes, but that was because he hadn't been at twenty-two, cousin. A man who doesn't learn the lesson of green melons at twenty will surely do so at seventy. However, we'll say that he left the melon patch well alone, probably because the rank and file had already stripped it bare, and that the expression is due to Miss Phillis's coquetting with—"

"Harold, you ought to be ashamed to say such things. From the way you talk, everyone will think her a flirt."

"Didn't you tell me that she had sixteen proposals of marriage, not counting nibbles?"

"Yes. And it's true, for Mamma told me."

"And what would you call a modern girl who had sixteen offers?"

"Oh, but that's different Harold. That would be horribly vulgar, of course, but all the girls of that

time had lots of proposals. It was the way things were then."

"Then why make boast of it in her case?"

"Why, you see—Pshaw! I don't boast of it, Harold; I only tell of it to prove how beautiful and attractive she was."

"Just as every girl of that generation was, if you'll believe their descendants. But how about the men?"

"Men? What do you mean?" demanded Mrs. Goddard.

"Why, if every girl had a baker's dozen or so of lovers, what an awful disgrace rests on our grandfathers."

"I don't understand what you mean, Harold."

"That each one was in love a dozen times before he could get a girl to have him. They must have been awful chumps. Really Lieutenant Dick, I don't wonder that you have the woe-begone look to your mouth, which a moment ago I ascribed to melons. Think of being rejected that often! No wonder they were six and eight bottle men; nothing short of a hogshead would do for me under such a series of disappointments. Their hearts must have looked as if they had been through a stone-breaker set to make top-dressing for macadam roads."

"Harold, you are perfectly unbearable. She was his first and only love."

"Then I suppose eleven other girls were short one proposal each, by his being so ungallant, as well as

unfashionable. How the dear creatures must have hated him."

"Nothing of the kind. Mamma assured me he was a great beau."

"Possibly because they liked a variation from the other kind. I should think that what we may term the 'rapid-fire' lovers of that time must have been rather a nuisance. As they usually married before they were much over twenty, they must have proposed at least three or four times a year. Probably once at each solstice and equinox."

"If you don't stop being silly, and tell your story, I'll begin one in your stead."

"Excuse me, all, for the discursiveness. To resume, Captain Dick sat for his portrait and courted Miss Phillis until early in August, when his regiment was ordered to Brooklyn. There he shared in the drubbing the Continental army got, but, fortunately, having, as you will see by the portrait, a good pair of legs, he was not taken prisoner, and having successfully run away, he 'lived to fight another day.'"

"He was promoted for his conduct, and you know it, Harold."

"Only because his superior officer couldn't run fast enough and so was captured. Clearly a company without a captain wouldn't do, and so Dick was given his colours. Well. Here he was back again and once more vainly sighing at the pretty face of Miss Phillis, none the better, I presume, in her eyes because of his masterly retreat. He was no

mitted to sigh for long, however, for the British effected a landing on Manhattan, and once more good legs were at a premium. It is needless to relate the part he bore in the retreat, first to the north end of the island, and then to White Plains, the one fact of importance to our tale being that he left behind him at Fairview not merely the girl of his heart, but the portrait, a full-length canvas not being exactly equippage for a soldier in an active campaign. It is to be hoped that he paid the poor artist—that is—sign painter—before departing.”

“It’s horrid of you to say such things, Harold, and I don’t see how you can do it. I’m sure he paid for it.”

“Then he unquestionably did, though I have known the masculine two and twenty sometimes a trifle neglectful of such little forms and conventions. And now that one thinks of it, may not that droop to the mouth be due to his worrying over where on earth he was to get the money to pay for the likeness? Passing that by, however, as irrelevant, here we have Dick himself in Westchester and Dick’s portrait at Fairview, both unhung, however deserving thereof the former was in—”

“Harold!”

“You should let me complete my sentence—however deserving thereof the former was in the eyes of King George’s cohorts. Well, these same British myrmidons pursued the retreating Continentals into Westchester, intent upon putting an end to resistance,

an intention persisted in until they came in sight of the position Washington had occupied. Not liking the look of it, and with a recollection of Bunker's Hill akin to that of the child who has discovered by contact how a hot stove feels, they took counsel and decided that there was an opportunity for the brave Hessians and Anspachers to cover themselves with undying glory and a foot of top-soil. Accordingly, the German regiments were ordered to assault and carry the American lines, and with alacrity and courage they declined to rob the British grenadiers of such an occasion for achieving fame. As this prudent declaration did not tend to increase the British liking for the task, it was abandoned, and their forces fell back to Manhattan, giving out in explanation that those particular native grapes were sour, and that they never had wanted them any way. It is a story in the family that when one of the British officers who was quartered at Fairview bitingly remarked that he'd like to see the face of Captain Goddard, Miss Phillis replied that he might have gratified his wish if he had taken the time to look behind him in the retreat, a retort tending to prove that though her ladyship might not be willing to surrender to Captain Dick herself, she did not propose to see him the butt of any one else. There is a curious distinction between a man's and a woman's love, in that he knows himself to be stricken with the first symptoms of the fever, but she can have the disease for months before she discovers what it is.

"Sort of walking typhoid, eh?" suggested one of the listeners.

"Much worse. Fewer recoveries," muttered the old bachelor.

"Meantime, while Miss Phillis was making the mouths of the British officers alternately water and droop, as once she had made Dick's—"

"Then you acknowledge that he did pay the poor artist," demanded the hostess, triumphantly.

"Is it kind to call the painter that, cousin? Remember, he is dead."

"You know perfectly well that I didn't mean any criticism on the quality of his work."

"Then you must have meant that he was poor in a worldly sense; ergo, it is clear that Grandfather Richard had not paid him?" questioned the narrator.

"Do finish your story, Harold," was her only retort.

"I should have long since, but for interruptions. Howe and his forces having done their share of retreating, it became a question in the Continental camp whether the British were going into winter quarters at New York, or whether they were planning a descent into New Jersey. Accurate knowledge on this point was of enormous importance, and the little that was obtainable was of the most conflicting nature. Under these circumstances Captain Dick offered to go into the city to see if he could not get the needed information, and his proposition

was eagerly accepted. The American cause still had friends in the town who could aid in the quest, three of whom were named to the young volunteer, and as the British could scarcely guard the whole water front of the city, it did not appear a difficult task to effect a landing and a communication with them.

“As time was everything, Dick secured the garb of a farmer, and rode some twelve miles that afternoon to Morrisania. One of the family after whom that place was named, being in camp, had recommended to the Captain a boatman who could be relied upon, and as soon as the darkness permitted, they rowed out of the Harlem into the East River, and pulled for New York, expecting to reach it some time before midnight. To their disappointment, they soon discovered that a number of British frigates and patrol boats were in the river, forcing them to proceed with the utmost caution, and thus long before their destination was reached, the tide turned, which meant more delay. Upon this the boatman refused to go farther, fearing that he could not make good his own return before daylight, and gave his companion the choice of either being landed where they were, or of returning with him. It is needless to say which alternative he took, and accordingly, a little after three o'clock the Captain found himself on the shores of Manhattan, with little farther knowledge as to his whereabouts.

“Fortunately, the barking of a dog gave

little guidance, and by this clue he groped his way through a field or two, until at last he came upon a farm house, to which, because of the dog and the unknown sympathies of its occupants, he gave a wide berth, but by its means was quickly upon the King's Bridge road, and therefore upon familiar ground. Turning southward upon it, he took as rapid a pace as he dared, for not knowing where an outpost might be placed some prudence was necessary. The wisdom of his precaution was soon shown by his coming in sight of a picket fire at the junction with the Middle Road. Frequent strolls during the previous summer with—let us say, his fellow officers—had made all this well known country to him, and he turned off into a lane, and then into one branching from it, which brought him, just as the sky was beginning to redden, behind the barn of Fairview."

"Oh, ho!" exclaimed one of the masculine listeners.

"That's what I've been hoping he'd do," eagerly cried a feminine one.

"Proceeding cautiously, he stole around the barn, and, wishing to make sure of the place of quick retreat, before venturing to the house, he softly rolled back one of the barn doors until there was space enough for him to enter. What the growing light revealed to him, led to a hasty retreat, for on piles of hay spread on the floor lay three red-coated troopers, and even as he drew back, one of them suddenly sat up, and looked about to see what had disturbed him.

A large chestnut tree stood within a few feet of the barn, and Dick jumped quietly behind it, not a moment too soon, for the cavalryman appeared at the doorway and looked out, while he tried to rub the sleep from his eyes. Seeing nothing, and too stupid still to draw any inference from the change in the door, he muttered a curse, and went back to his hay. Waiting a little for safety, the Captain left his concealment, and keeping out of the range of the crack, and using every bit of cover that he could, he sneaked his way to the house. It was now almost daylight and every moment was making his situation more perilous. Hoping to gain aid from within, and knowing that the servants would be first stirring, he went to the kitchen, and peeped in at one of the windows. Here, again, he was doomed to disappointment, for he could see by the light of the mouldering logs in the fireplace more sleeping figures stretched on the floor.

“Oftentimes our luckiest actions are forced upon us, and so it proved in this case. While Goddard momentarily debated what it was best to do, the sound of the barn doors being rolled open attracted his attention, and there issued forth one of the troopers, leading a horse. He was followed by a second and then a third one, each with a horse, and then all took their way to the watering trough, which was in plain view of the house. Our Captain at the first warning had hastily placed himself behind the vines growing about the kitchen porch, this being the

only cover at hand, and here he stood, though wishing that he had sought concealment in the orchards or elsewhere, and trusting that they would presently return to the barn and give him a chance to escape. Even this hope was quickly killed, for as the horses drank, one of the men put a bugle to his lips and there came across the lawn the notes to which soldiers have put the words :

‘ I can’t get ’em up,
I can’t get ’em up,
I can’t get ’em up in the morning.
I can’t get ’em up,
I can’t get ’em up,
I can’t get ’em up at all.’

“ As if echoing a disproof, the Captain heard sounds which indicated that those within were stirring, and he knew that the protecting vines which the autumn frosts had almost stripped of their leaves, would be no concealment from any one coming on to the porch. For an instant he balanced either a run for it, or boldly joining the men at the trough; then as the best, he put his foot on the lattice and as quickly as he could climbed to the roof of the porch. Here, by lying down he could almost conceal himself from view. This he effected, and none too soon, for barely was he placed, when he heard the kitchen door open, and footsteps below him, sounds which turned the eyes of those at the trough to-

wards the house, and as he could see them plainly, he realised that if their attention was not fixed on their fellow troopers, a little lifting of their eyes would reveal him to them. Fortunately for him, the two groups began to gird at each other, as those below left the porch and walked toward their fellows. The newcomers after a moment's pause with their fellows continued on to the barn, evidently to get their own chargers, and those at the trough faced about to continue the vocal sparring.

"It was the Captain's one chance, and, getting on his knees, he tried the window, which, to his relief, he found was unfastened. Not losing an instant, he raised it enough to gain entrance, and crawled in. Turning, he closed the window, at the same time looking to see if the dragoons had discovered him, and he breathed easier when he saw them still intent on their various occupations.

"Safe for the time being, or at least out of his worst peril, Captain Dick turned about. A big four-post bedstead, with the curtains still buttoned together, warned him that the bed was probably still occupied, and two pairs of heavy riding boots on the floor, and sundry parts of uniforms thrown on chairs, only served to assure him that he had but changed, and not escaped the dangers that beset him.

"'Is that you, McCoy?' asked a sleepy voice from behind the curtains.

"Close to the window by which he had entered was a door, and, as his one chance, Dick softly

opened it and slipped through, to find himself in a closet redolent of lavender.

“‘Is that you, McCoy?’ again demanded the voice.

“‘What the deuce is the row?’ asked a second voice, crossly.

“‘I thought I heard some one in the room, man.’

“‘It was your own infernal snoring, I’ll be bound. Devil seize me, what a sweet thing life would be if there was no going to bed and no getting up.’

“Well. More grumbling followed, and then the two finally set on to dressing, no detail of which is worth mention save the circumstance that in pulling on his boots, one of the officers, by ill luck, chose to lean against the closet door, which promptly closed tight, and latched itself. At the moment Captain Dick gave the tell-tale click no thought, but when the men finally left the room, and he ran his hand up and down the door, to find only a smooth surface, he realised that by that small accident he had been made a prisoner. It is true that probably he could, by bracing himself, force the latch, but on consideration he preferred not to risk the noise of it, preferring to wait the coming of one of the servants, knowing for certain that he could trust any of them to release him quietly, and to aid him in every possible way. So like a philosopher he settled himself on the floor in the most restful attitude he could compass, and waited.

"It seemed to him ages elapsed before any one entered the room, and when at last some one did, it brought only disappointment to the prisoner, for the heavy stride bespoke a man. He was followed presently by one of the maids, and the poor Captain was forced to listen to a half-bantering, half-gallant conversation as one made the beds and tidied the room and the other polished the swords and buckles; and apparently this semi-flirtation greatly lengthened the dual tasks. Finally the maid completed her duties and departed to another room, and then all the sounds that came to the hungry, sleepy and tired man was the faint rubbing of brushes or chamois.

"Suddenly he sat up from his recumbent position against the wall, with a consciousness that he had been asleep, but for how long he had not the slightest idea. For a moment he was too dazed to remember his whereabouts, but in a flash it came back, and he listened.

"'Capotted, by George,' he heard a man say.

"'Damn the luck,' muttered another, and then followed the clink of coins. 'For heaven's sake, man, do deal faster.'

A pause ensued, and then:

"'Seven in suit.'

"'Good.'

"'And a sixième.'

"'Good, curse it.'

"'And three aces.'

"'Not good.'

“ ‘Seven and sixteen are twenty-three, and nine cards and a card played are thirty-three—Forty-three I score, and—Hallo! What brings you, Howgate?’

“ ‘Orders from headquarters,’ replied a new voice. ‘The regiment is to muster to-morrow morning before daylight.’

“ ‘What’s in the wind?’

“ ‘Headquarters don’t tell, but as similar orders have been issued to seven other regiments, and as we are to embark our horses, ’tis evident the Jerseys are to be invaded.’

“ ‘Ten guineas that we eat our Christmas dinner in Philadelphia,’ offered one of the card players.

“ ‘If we don’t meet with a second White Plains.’

“ ‘’Tis on that very fact I base my offer. With Washington in Westchester we can be well across the Delaware before he so much as knows we’ve started.’

“ As can be imagined, this was news to the Captain, which set him to alternately blessing his stars—that he should have been in a position to hear it—and to cursing them—that that same position allowed him to put his knowledge to such little use. After some more talk, needless here to repeat, the officer who had brought the order departed, and the two resumed their card playing, to the disgust of the prisoner, who fretted and fumed as he was forced to listen to the monotonous declarations and countings, varied only by the chink of coin or the exclamation

ation of joy or anger at some particular piece of luck, either good or bad. Having no idea how long he had slept, he could form no conclusion as to the probable time, save by the fact that the air of the closet was becoming well-nigh insupportable. Yet there was nothing to do but submit to the enforced imprisonment and suffocating atmosphere, for a discovery was certain but to make the former more serious, and probably only terminated by a suffocation absolutely fatal.

“ At last a bell, which the Captain recognised as that rung for meals, sounded, putting a finish to the cards and drawing the players downstairs. Ere the tramp of their boots had sounded through the lower hall, Goddard had his back braced against the wall, and one foot on the door, but then faltered and waited, for he knew that he could not force his way out without noise, so he concluded to let them get well started in their eating and drinking before he made the attempt, knowing full well that few things are so engrossing to human kind.

“ To make sure that his own eagerness should not get the better of his prudence, he slowly counted two hundred, then braced himself and pushed on the door, slowly increasing the pressure. One foot proving unequal to the purpose, he added the second one. This proved too much for the stout ash, and though the heavy latch and hinges held firm, the whole centre of the door, both cross and panels suddenly gave way with a crash, which to Dick

sounded as if the whole house were coming down about his ears.

“As the wood caved outward, the Captain went to the floor none too lightly. Without stopping to pick himself up, he crawled through the outlet. In the closet he had planned out exactly what course to pursue. If a glance out of the window showed him a clear field, he intended to descend as he had come, and to trust to the fleetness of his legs and the nearness of the orchards and woods in making a run for it; but if he saw that the dragoons still blocked that road to liberty, then he hoped to conceal, but not imprison himself in one of the adjoining rooms, and to bide a chance for actual escape, either with or without the aid of his relations.

“In these carefully thought out plans, the Captain had failed to take one possibility into account, and so he was very much taken back to find that he had crawled into an absolutely dark room, and that out of doors was equally dark. He had slept during the noon-tide meal and that now being discussed was supper.

Few minds act to advantage when suddenly surprised, and that of the Captain led him to do what was probably the poorest thing he could do. Quite ignoring the fact that if the darkness would conceal him, it would also conceal whatever danger there might be, he carried out his first intention, and raising the window, he stepped out on the roof of the porch. He had barely done so when he became con-

scious of men's voices below him, and he realised that an unknown number of people were standing or sitting on the porch. Barely was he assured of this, when his ears were greeted with the demand from below,

“ ‘Hello! Who's above there?’ ”

“As quietly as was possible with quickness, Dick stepped back through the window, and went groping his way across the room. He had lost precious time, however, for as he put his hand on the latch of the door, he heard steps outside in the hall. None the less he opened it just enough to look out. What first caught his eye was the flickering light of a candle, carried by one of the negro servants of his uncle, but its light also served to reveal the unwelcome presence of two troopers, one standing at the head of the stairs, and the second close behind the negress.

“ ‘What is it, Boggs?’ enquired some one on the floor below.

“ ‘Devil burn me, if I know what it was, Captain,’ one of the men replied, ‘but it sounded for all the world like a twelve-pound shot tearing its way through a partition.’ ”

“ ‘Never mind what it sounded like. Look about and see what 'twas.’ ”

“ ‘Very good, sir.’ ”

“ ‘Oh, Massa Soldier, you don't tink it wuz no sperit?’ questioned the negress, while she glanced about apprehensively.

“ ‘Twas a mighty solid one, if it was,’ laughed the dragoon. ‘We’ll look in here first,’ he suggested, making a motion toward the door of the room opposite the one in which they stood. ‘Give me the candle.’

“ ‘For de lub ob Heaben, don’t take de light away. Dey say de debil dun fly off with folks sometimes,’ whimpered the woman.

“ ‘Nonsense!’ growled the man, and catching the candle from her hand, he disappeared through the doorway, leaving the hall in almost total darkness.

“ It was the condition for which Goddard had been hoping, and he stole through the doorway and on tip-toe groped his way towards the stairs, intending to take the soldier who stood at its head by surprise, and then to make a dash for it. Unfortunately, the negress, in terror of the darkness, was seeking to escape from the upper hall, and so the two came into violent collision. This drew from her a series of ear-splitting shrieks, and a clutch at the Captain’s arm so desperate that it took all his strength to free himself. Just as he broke loose from it, the hall was lighted up by the return of the trooper, with the candle, from the bedroom, which revealed the dragoon still standing at the head of the stairs.

“ ‘We have him,’ he called, and the second shouted, ‘Here’s the thief.’

“ Quick as a flash the Captain sprang back towards the man with the light, and with a sweep of

his arm sent the candlestick flying from his hand; this done, he dodged sideways as far as the wall would let him, and then pressing as flat against it as he could, he edged along it till he reached the end of the baluster. Guided by this, he moved rapidly to the head of the stairs, where he was forced to halt a moment to find out the position of the trooper.

He who had held the candle was expressing his opinion in unmeasured Anglo-Saxon, and warning his companion to look sharp.

“‘Look sharp!’ replied the soldier so near the fugitive that it made him jump. ‘Nice advice after your letting the rogue—’

“There Goddard’s fist, full in the face, cut short the speech, and sent the fellow rolling downstairs; and his assailant followed almost as rapidly. Before the bottom was reached candles lighted the lower hall, and Dick saw that if he continued it would *only* be to rush into the arms of three officers. Turning, with the intention of retracing his steps, he found the soldier awaiting him above. One glance showed him the cause was up, and with coolness and good sense he calmly sat down on a step.

“‘What is it? What is it?’ Phillis’s voice asked, and at the same instant she and her father appeared beside the officers.

“His moment to collect himself served the Captain in good stead, for he had gathered his wits together, and now, before either of his relatives had

so much as seen, much more recognised him, he said, 'Oh, please, sir, Squire Goelet, things look agin me, but I swow I didn't come to thieve, but only to ask a favour of you, an' as you wuz at supper, Fanny told me to go right up and get what I wanted, and I hope, sir, that I didn't do wrong, sir, and that if I did, you'll forgive me, for really, Squire, I didn't intend no offence.' Goddard purposely kept on talking, first to cover the very natural exclamations of surprise which both Mr. Goelet and his daughter uttered at hearing his voice, and then to give them time to recover themselves. And as he spoke, he rose, and slowly descended the stairs. 'Don't you know me—Josh Riley—Squire?' he ended, as he reached the bottom of the flight.

"'Whoever you are,' growled the soldier, holding his jaw with one hand and feeling his shoulder with the other, 'What do you mean by—'

"'Silence!' ordered one of the officers. 'Do you know this fellow?' he asked of Mr. Goelet.

"'Yes. Yes,' broke in Phillis, with her hand on her father's arm. 'It's just as he says. He's Josh Riley.'

"'And what were you doing upstairs?' demanded the officer.

"'I own it wuzn't with permission,' said Dick, with a cringing manner, 'but findin' the Squire wuz at supper, I put it to Fanny if I should disturb him, and she said to go right up.'

"'What for?' persisted the questioner.

“ ‘Why, for the medicine, Kunel,’ explained Dick, finding an explanation just as he needed it.

“ ‘And did you get it, Joshua?’ asked Phillis.

“ ‘No, Miss Phillis. It wuz dark, an’ I went kerplump into suthin, and made such a tarnel racket I thought the house wuz comin’ down. An’ then I heard folks a comin’, an’ thought I’d made too free perhaps, and so I tried to sneak out, and then I ran into Dinah, and she set up sech a screechin’ that I clean went off my head and in tryin’ to get away I knocked the light out of the snoger’s hand and hit this one a clip in the jaw. ’Deed, I’m sorry, Squire, and Mr. Officers, and I hope you won’t hold it up agin me.’

“ ‘Of course, you won’t will you, Father?’ remarked Phillis.

“ ‘Why, certainly not, Joshua. Come with me, and ye shall drink a glass of Madeira, and then ye shall have any medicine I can give ye.’

“ A general move to the dining-room followed, Dick fairly hugging himself over the success of his finesse. Once there, as the officers resumed their seats, the host filled a glass from the decanter, and presented it to Goddard.

“ ‘I’ll get the medicine while you drink,’ offered Phillis. ‘I hope your little brother isn’t any worse?’

“ ‘Thank ’ee, Miss, and may you be rewarded as you deserve. He’s about the same.’

“ While they were exchanging these remarks, one of the officers rose, and went to the hall door. From

that coign of vantage he said 'I believe, I am not mistaken in thinking we are honoured with the presence of Captain Goddard.'

" 'What the deuce do you mean?' demanded a fellow officer.

" 'If you'll compare the portrait in the next room with Mr. Joshua Riley, I don't think you'll remain in doubt.'

" 'What? Ho! A good matching of the cards, Lieutenant.'

" Goddard drew a long breath. 'Well, gentlemen,' he said, 'as you will have me an officer, pray treat me as one. I have not tasted food or drink since yesterday at four. May I satisfy nature a little, now that the game is up? I pledge you my word to make no attempt to escape while I eat.'

" 'Aye, sit down man, and eat your fill,' cried the commander, 'and sorry I am for you.'

" Dick turned and took Miss Phillis's hand and kissed it. 'I'm glad that you are at the end of it,' he said.

" 'What end?' enquired the girl, innocently.

" 'Of my capture,' replied Dick, with a slight choke. Then he took his seat, only to find that the thirst and hunger which had so tormented him in the closet, were things of the past. He tried to eat, but each mouthful nearly strangled him.

" A strange quiet, full of significance, had come over every one, finally broken by Mr. Goelet whispering a couple of questions to the man on his right.

"Nothing," the latter said aloud, after a shake of the head.

"Not even Sir William?"

"No. It's too plain a case."

"Case of what?" asked Phillis, suspiciously.

"Nothing, my dear," replied her father, gently, but she saw the tears in his eyes.

"Father, what is it?" she cried. "Dick, you will tell me," she appealed.

Twice the Captain tried to speak, and twice he failed; finally he turned to Mr. Goelet. "For God's sake, uncle, tell her," he begged.

"Come with me, Phillis," said her father, rising and going to the door which opened into the parlour.

As Phillis was about to follow, she halted, and spoke, "You will not take my cousin away to prison before I return, will you, Major Sutherland?"

"Certainly not, Miss Goelet. I'll promise that you have speech with him before sending him to the Provost."

After the two were gone, the Major whispered some orders to one of the officers, and he, too, left the room. Before long he returned with two troopers and reported that horses were saddled and an escort waiting.

"That is all, Lieutenant. I shall ride to the Provost myself, and then report the capture to Sir William. Will you tell Miss Goelet that we must be moving?"

Even as he spoke, Mr. Goelet reentered the room, and the Major repeated his request to him.

"My daughter, Sir, is naturally very much upset by the terrible news I was compelled to break to her, and she begs you to give her a few moments to recover herself. Surely five minutes is little to ask for in such a matter?"

"True, Mr. Goelet, and I would I might grant more than that. Tell her that her wish is a command to me."

Once more Mr. Goelet returned to the parlour, and once more the men in the dining room relapsed into moody silence. It was a woman's—that is, a long—five minutes they had to wait, but at last, the girl, looking very white, but also contained, opened the door of the parlour. She came no farther, but from that point she said,

"Major Sutherland, I have one more request to make, and one that I implore you to grant."

"But name it, Miss Goelet."

"There was more between my cousin Richard and myself than the world had knowledge of, and I pray of you that we may say a farewell to each other in this room, out of hearing of all but ourselves."

"It is granted," assented the commander, "but I must first place a man outside the window and door that—"

"'Tis needless, sir, for we will not close the door, and will stand in clear sight during the whole inter-

view," cried Phillis. "Oh, sir, do not prolong my misery."

"Forgive me, but I must take precautions, Miss Goelet. However, this will do, if you go not out of our observation," he added, as, entering the parlour, he bolted the window, and locking the door into the hall, put the key into his pocket. Leaving her, he returned to the dining room, and said to Dick, "You must take your farewell now, sir," and then took a place at the table from which he could watch the girl, who was now standing beside the mantel.

The Captain bowed his thanks, too deeply moved to speak, and went to his love. The Major saw him take her hand, and so they stood for a moment; then the girl's head dropped on Dick's shoulder, and he put his arms about her. Ashamed to watch, the Major raised his glass and, as he drank, looked at the ceiling. When his head and eyes resumed their normal position, he saw that the only change that had taken place in their position was that now Miss Goelet's back was turned to him, though her head still lay on Goddard's shoulder. With an imprecation on the duties of soldiering, the officer reached out and refilled his glass from the decanter.

An ear-rending scream from the kitchen, followed by loud voices, broke on the quiet, and there appeared in the doorway one of the negro servants.

"Massa Goelet, woon youse tell dese wuthless dragoons ter behave? Massa Officer, dey jes drive poor Dinah mos 'stracted."

"What's the matter?" questioned Sutherland.

"Mattah? Deyse jis all over everyting—
Deyse—"

"Look to it, Lieutenant," ordered the Major, "and see that the men behave themselves." Suddenly realising that he was looking towards the kitchen, he turned and glanced into the parlour, to find the lovers still standing as they had been before the interruption. Coming back to his first intention, he drank off his wine, and setting the glass down rose as he did so. "I don't wish to be cruel, Captain Goddard," he said, "but time presses, and—"

"Just a minute more," broke in Phillis's voice, and the Major settled back into his seat, and once again filled and slowly emptied his glass.

"I'll have up another bottle, Major," suggested Mr. Goelet.

"Not for me, thank you, for I must be in the saddle and attending to this wretched business," replied the officer as he pushed his chair back, and walked to the parlour doorway. "I must ask you to come now, Captain," he said.

The pair remained motionless, and again Sutherland started to repeat his request. Before it was half uttered, he sprang forward, only to find Phillis with her arms about the picture of the Captain, which had been hastily cut from its frame, while the open window, hitherto concealed from him by the chimney breast, told an equally plain story. The whole thing had been planned out before her return to the

dining-room, the picture cut out from its background with a knife, rolled up and put on the mantel, and Dinah instructed to create the diversion she so successfully did, during which, of course, Master Dick was whisked behind the chimney breast where he could unbolt and raise the window, while Miss Phillis held his canvas simulation to her heart. And so now you have the story of those humpy lines in the portrait, and my only wonder is that they don't show more."

"And did he escape?" asked some one of the house party.

"'Did he escape?' What a question to ask! Do you suppose he could be recaptured after all that? No, he safely reached Washington's camp with his information, of course, the Continental army was shifted at once to New Jersey, held the British in check as long as it could, and finally, at Trenton and Princeton, saved our nation."

"And did Phillis and he marry?" asked a feminine listener.

"Of course, again! Don't you know that her saving him in that way, according to all the rules of romance was the next thing to a clergyman and a ring?"

"How delightful to have a portrait with such a history!" sighed a sentimental maiden of nameless years. "I should think you'd be so proud of your ancestor, Mrs. Goddard."

"I always have been," acceded the hostess.

"And from to-night I think my cousin will be prouder than ever, I predict," asserted the story teller, "because much of this was new to her, and I think she ought to thank me for grubbing it out of musty old papers."

"But I say," remarked one of the older men, "that English major was five kinds of a fool it seems to me."

"I think he was fairly typical of the British officer," agreed the story teller.

"And do you mean to say that he could mistake the portrait for the prisoner, with the one in full uniform and three-cornered hat, and the other in farmer's clothes, and I presume from what he had gone through, bareheaded?" demanded an objector.

"You are one of the fellows whom it is impossible to please," protested Mr. Goddard. "I've told you the story; now why do you want to pick holes in it?"

"But it's impossible to believe that he—"

"Oh, dear, here's another one. You wanted a story, and I've done my best. If you had asked for history, I'd have taken down one of the reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, over there, and read aloud to you a series of documents. But that isn't what you, or the public want, and you know it. An ox team couldn't drag either of you to spend an hour on such a book. 'Tell us a story,' you beg, 'in which the daring hero gets idiotically into the most desperate of dangers, and just as every-

thing is lost, let the brave and beautiful heroine save him by some wonderful device, and let him save the country, and when the dove of peace appears with the olive branch, which but for these twain would never have been, let them be married, under the stars and stripes, and roses.' 'But be sure,' you add, 'that your story is a true one, with no inaccuracy or improbability to mar its artistic verisimilitude.' Why don't you ask for a truthful lie, and have done with it?"

"But, Harold, the story you've just told us is true, isn't it?" asked Mrs. Goddard.

"Not a word of it cousin."

"Oh, but that won't do," said the objector, "because otherwise why was the portrait cut from the frame?"

"As it happens," ended Mr. Goddard, "the portrait of Captain Dick is in the possession of an aunt of mine, and this is a copy of it made some twenty years ago. When I succeeded, at the opening of my tale in getting you all to see the pretended ridges of paint, I said to myself, 'We are in for an entertaining evening, for here is a crowd with plenty of imagination.'"

"I think it shabby of you, Harold, to fool us all so," complained Mrs. Goddard.

"And then go and tell us," added a girl, "for otherwise we'd have all believed it."

"It would have been such a nice story to tell to people about the portrait," sighed its owner.

"And why not now?" questioned Harold Goddard, "for it's just as true as most of family traditions."

"How dare you make such an assertion, with three Colonial Dames present?" laughed a man. "Aren't you afraid they'll quarrel with you?"

"The Colonial Dames are too busy quarrelling with each other to waste powder on me," responded the story-teller. "Even the Revolution pales as a war when compared with the fierce contests of the so-called 'patriotic societies.'"

"I won't sit here and listen to such slurs," protested one of the Dames, who was of an age that had she been termed such in any other sense, she would have been deeply insulted. "Furthermore, I'm going to tell you a family tradition that is as true as yours was—otherwise—and if any one dares to so much as question it, or treat it disrespectfully!" There she ended, leaving her threat all the more terrible by its vagueness.

"See how artfully Miss Blake forestalls the interruptions and scepticism which spoiled my story," murmured Harold Goddard.

"You've had your turn, Harold. Now do be still," requested the hostess.

"Some sixty years ago—" began the volunteer.

"I knew she was no spring chicken, but I never would have put her down for sixty," whispered an irrepressible youth to the girl next him.

“What is that you said, Mr. Reynolds?” demanded the woman of untold years.

“I beg your pardon,” stuttered the criminal, “I—I only—”

“Mr. Reynolds said he always wanted a title,” said the girl, helping him out.

“Well, to satisfy him, I’ll call it: ARTEMISIA’S MIRROR.”

ARTEMISIA'S MIRROR

SOME sixty years ago, there lived in New York in a tiny frame cottage in Greenwich village, a little girl who had three names. To her mother and her grandfather, she was Pet; to her mates, she was Arty; but on the record page of the family Bible, and, alack and alas, on the sampler her mother had marked out for her, she was Artemisia Vanderhooven.

In defiance of her Dutch name, she was dark-eyed and dark-haired, quick and graceful in her motions as a kitten, quick, too, in her temper, impatient, restless as quicksilver, fond of playing with boys, hating everything quiet and dutiful. Such was the child who was set down on summer afternoons to record in weary stitches with a fine disregard of rhythm, that

*Artemisia Vanderhooven is my name
America is my nation
New York is my dwelling place
And Christ is my salvation.*

And furthermore, as if one stanza were not enough for mortal flesh to toil through,

*When I am dead and in my grave
And all my bones are rotten
I leave these verses after me
That I be not forgotten.*

It was Pet's miserable conviction that she should be in her grave before the very first line of the memorial was finished, so many times did the silk tangle and break, the needle rust in the little hot fingers, or the scissors take to themselves wings and fly away. Three times during the progress of that first line did her relentless mother make Pet rip out every stitch. Nor was the appearance of the sampler improved when used for wiping away tears.

The only drop of sweet in Pet's bitter cup was that sometimes on very hot days, when there was not a breath of air in the little house, she was allowed to take her sewing out into the garden, where Grandsir worked among his lilacs and May roses, his tulips and hyacinths, his hearts-ease and London pride. The garden was a haven of peace, for Grandsir never admonished one—on the contrary, he often seemed to forget one's presence. But to be forgotten was so far preferable to being remembered too strenuously, that Pet had no fault to find with him. She was his hot champion against all criticism,—none the less ardent that the chief criticism—her mother's—was all unspoken. Never had Pet heard her mother say an unkind word of Grandsir; yet, with the keen intuition of childhood, she divined her mother's disapproval of his queer ways—his continual pottering over the flowers, his Indian-like silences. This tacit reproach it was impossible to combat, but when her playmate, Millie Kennedy, once said that her father said that old Mr. Vander-

hooven was cracked, Pet, though by no means sure what cracked meant, slapped Millie, pulled her hair, and drove her home weeping. Pet was no Griselda.

Grandsir was trimming the box hedges one afternoon, looking, as he moved slowly about,—a silent bowed figure, with long white beard and shining shears,—rather like Father Time himself. Pet, sitting with her work-box on the step of the grape-arbour, was moved to help him. With her own little scissors she began snipping off box leaves, till, the scissors catching on a stiff twig, they flew out of her hand into the heart of the hedge. Pet jumped up to rescue them, when over went the work-box, its spools and skeins and needle books and emery and tape-measure all rolling about in the flowers and grass. She stamped her feet with rage; then, creeping about on her knees to pick up her work, she stained with loam the front of her white frock. Her one white frock had been put on to go to Millie's house to supper, and now Mother would never let her go. Unless perhaps, she should work so much and so diligently, all afternoon, that Mother would forgive her. With the fever of desperation, she bent over her sampler.

Presently Grandsir came nearer. Pet looked up and smiled as he approached—she always smiled when he came by, as one does at a baby. And now, for a miracle, Grandsir withdrew himself from the land of dreams where he walked alone, and put his hand on her flushed brow, and said

“What's the matter with Grandsir's Pet?”

She would not tell him about the frock, for she knew she should cry, and lose time from the sampler, so she burst out

“I hate my name!”

“Artemisia?” said Grandsir softly, puzzledwise.

“Artemisia Vanderhooven!” cried that young person in accents of wrath.

“Twenty-one letters to work. Look at mother’s little name, Jane Platt—Why didn’t they call me Jane? Artemisia! I hate Artemisia!

“But her name was Artemisia,” said Grandsir, gently.

“My grandmother’s?” Pet remembered the fact suddenly, and dropped her angry voice a key. She must have hurt Grandsir’s feelings. Oh, day of misfortune! But he was never angry with her, and after a moment, she ventured

“And did she like her name, Grandsir?”

“She liked it,” said Grandsir, “and I liked it.”

The haze that separated him from this world’s doings came into his eyes again, and he spoke no more, and turned away to his work. But Pet was not done with the subject. The marvel of an Artemisia who liked the name absorbed her. She rose and slipped her hand into the old man’s, rubbing against his side like a kitten.

“Why did she like it, Grandsir dear?”

Grandsir was that adorable being, a person who never joked. When others gave her an answer

could not understand, cruel experience had taught her to suspect witticisms at her expense; but Grand-sir's mysterious replies always had sense in them, if you could only work it out. He was so old and could tell so much if he would. It often seemed when with him as if she stood on the very threshold of a store-house packed full of forgotten treasures; and never had she felt the explorer's thrill more vividly than now, when he answered at length, after a pause so long that she feared he would not answer at all—

“On account of the mirror, I think.”

She paused an instant, almost afraid to breathe, lest the treasure-house door close upon her; but he did not speak again; and finally, very softly, as one who fears to frighten some shy wood-creature, she repeated

“The mirror, sir?”

This time the answer came at once,

“Cellini's mirror—Artemisia's mirror.”

“Did the mirror belong to her, Grand-sir?”

“Yes,” he answered. And now a strange thing happened. The old man's placid face which, like the faces of the gods—or the dumb brutes—neither laughed nor wept, broke into a smile. His voice changed with it, and from an absent murmur as of one talking in a dream took on a louder, livelier, human tone. “At least, she took it, when she came with me. She said no one had a better right. Her name was on the frame.”

Pet sighed with rapture. The past, the mysterious, the miraculous was unrolling before her.

"What did it look like, Grandsir?"

He seemed surprised.

"The child's seen it."

"No, Grandsir, never," she protested. Could it be that the mirror existed? The mirror with her name—her own name, despised no longer—on the frame?

"It's put away for you," said Grandsir. "For little Artemisia."

She jumped up and down in joy.

"Oh, Grandsir, when can I have it? I don't hate the name now, I love it. Oh, when may I have it?"

The haze crept over Grandsir's face again. "Your mother——"

"Oh, no, Grandsir," the child cried. "It isn't mother's. It's just yours and mine. Oh, *please*, Grandsir. I'd be so careful of it. I love it so."

Mother never would have listened for a moment, but Grandsir, the only reasonable grown-up person whom Pet had ever seen, seemed to appreciate the justice of the argument.

"You would love it, wouldn't you?" he said. "She loved it too. She loved it dearly. She had it in her hand when he killed her."

"Oh, Grandsir!" the child cried, her eyes wide in horror. "Did some one kill your Artemisia?"

The cloud came over the old man's face; he

frowned and clenched his fingers, in vain effort to think.

"I think they let him off," he muttered at length. "It was a long time ago. I presume" he added, with a pathetic struggle for self-respect, "I presume I never inquired just what happened." He turned away mechanically to his clipping, but Pet clutched his arm.

"But the mirror, Grandsir. Won't you let Artemisia have the mirror?"

He said never a word, but went straight into the house and got it for her.

It was a silver-framed glass, about twelve inches square, surrounded by a ring of laughing cupids, pelting one another with roses. Over the glass was a coat of arms; below, another, but quite different. On the right, running down the frame, was the name of Artemisia, and opposite, on the left, the name of Odoardo.

"But who was Odoardo?" cried Pet, as she took the treasure into her eager hands.

Then, bit by bit, day by day, the story of the mirror was revealed.

Somewhat to her surprise, Pet was allowed to keep the dear possession. Her mother feared it would make her a very vain little girl. "But," said honest Pet, to whom had never occurred the notion of using Artemisia's mirror to look at herself in, "I don't care about it because it's a looking-glass; I

care about it because it has my name on it." And her mother, seeing the child hug it in her arms, had not the heart to take it away.

Now were the sewing-hours, hours of joy. Pet would take her little chair into the garden, plant it close to whatever flower-bed was absorbing Grand-sir, sit down with the sacred mirror on her knees,—for all her heedless ways she never once scratched or dented it—and ply the old gentleman with questions. And from what he told, and what her mother knew, and what, later, her own imagination supplied to her, she constructed the history of the mirror.

About 1527 I suppose, at all events, when the question of King Henry VIII.'s divorce was first broached, and the king and his Holy Father at Rome were the best friends in the world, a certain young courtier named Edward Sutton was despatched to the Vatican, to breathe privily into Clement's ear a moving account of his Majesty's sufferings by reason of his unchurchly marriage. That he Edward, accomplished much for his master, history does not show, but he did very well for himself when he married the beauty and heiress, Artemisia Visconti. Jewels and plate and gold coin he carried back to England in his wife's coffers, and, dearest to Artemisia of all her gear, her father's gift, the mirror. The glass was dull, to be sure, and flawed here and there, like a pond on a gusty day; for mirror-making was an infant industry then, carried on with infantile skill. But Artemisia, never having

seen better, was quite satisfied. And who indeed would think of defects in the glass, when Cellini had made the frame? Artemisia never went from London to Sutton House (the Dominican priory which the King had wrenched from the Monks for his favourite Sir Edward), without the loved mirror. It was unpacked and placed in her bedchamber, even at the roadside inns where she passed a night, and in the morning packed again, oh, so carefully, and strapped to my lady's own saddle for the next day's ride. The mirror hung, very epitome of worldliness, on the grey priory wall where never mirror had hung before, and watched all the junketings of the idle triflers that passed before it. The old walls, that never since their building had beheld aught but black-gowned monks at their sombre duties and bare refectations must have looked in horrified amaze on the feasts, the games, the dancing, the gay plumage of women and men. But the mirror, born, like its mistress, in mirth-loving Italy, beamed approval. From its high place, like a king on his dais, it presided over masque and rout, and gave smiling sanction to all. It felt, doubtless—how should a mirror guess otherwise?—that all passing and repassing before its glass, all actions within its sight, were but a pageant arranged for its pleasure. Like the King in his box at the play, it graciously rewarded the actors by giving back smile for smile when the piece was gay, and sympathetic frowns when lowering Tragedy showed her face. And, greatest tribute of

all, the mirror paid the players the courtesy of unflinching attention. Day in, day out, season by season, year by year, be the piece gay or be the piece dull, absorbing drama or veriest farce, the mirror with unwearied patience, watched, watched, always watched. All the days of her life, it watched the lady of Sutton, and when at length the name of Artemisia Visconti was carved beside the English Kates and Elizabeths in Sutton church, it watched her children.

It almost forgot Benvenuto's workshop, or Artemisia's bridal chamber, overlooking the Tiber, so overlaid were those pictures by the swift, changing visions of the Priory. For two hundred years and more, the mirror hung in the great hall reflecting marriage feast and funeral breakfast, peace and war, retinues of Tudors, Stuarts, Brunswicks. It nearly lost its Priory home under Catholic Mary, only to have its right confirmed by Protestant Elizabeth. It saw the stately first Charles when once he spent a night at Sutton House; what it did not see,—it was hidden in the cellars lest it should see or be seen—was the nag of a roundhead trooper tied to the very hook where itself had hung so long. But at length the land was at peace again, and Cellini's mirror took its old proud place. Where it had been for a hundred years, there it remained for a hundred more, and ought, so the Suttons aver, to be hanging to-day. But we Vanderhoovens hold otherwise.

We maintain that the mirror is ours, on stronger testimony than that of the Suttons—the mirror's own.

At the beginning of the last century, there dwelt in Sutton House another Artemisia. Dark-haired she was, like her remote ancestress, with a clear skin, flushing and paling as she talked, and brown eyes looking out eagerly on life, demanding of it something more than the pompous comfort to which she had been born. A summer in London, a winter in Bath, marriage with a neighbouring squire, servants to manage, tenants to patronise, the still-room to order, music to copy, and accounts to keep,—these satisfied her sisters, but Artemisia, lying wide-eyed in bed o' nights, had dreams of a wider world. The moment was ripe for the fairy prince, and lo, he appeared. His name was Hendrick Vanderhooven, and he came from the United States of America, from a place bearing the extraordinary name of Schenectady. He was young, handsome, a gentleman's son, but, above all, he was different. This difference was his conquering charm, assisted by the fact that from a parent's point of view he was utterly ineligible. In the first place he came from the rebellious colony, where hardly thirty years before, the Earl of Sutton's regiment had suffered grievous rout, the recollection of which stung Lord Sutton even now. And besides rumours of a new war filled the air.

To the deadly crime of being an American, Hen-

drick added the unforgivable sin of being a younger son. In Lord Sutton's opinion, human depravity could no farther go. The sobbing Artemisia, told that her family blushed for her, retorted that they need not blush for her long. This was interpreted to be a threat of dying of a broken heart, and was pooh-poohed accordingly. The family mistook Artemisia.

One midnight, a little figure, clad in a kitchen-maid's home-spun gown, stole from stair to stair with a lightness of tread no kitchen-maid ever attained. The hob-nailed shoes were in one hand; in the other she carried, tied together in a stout gray shawl, those worldly possessions which she had thought suitable to begin, with her, her new life on the new continent. Fifty years afterward, the man who had awaited her in the garden that night named over to her granddaughter every article that the English Artemisia carried in her shawl. The little garden in Christopher Street was as like as love and pains could make it, to the great garden at Sutton House; Hendrick Vanderhooven, who could not remember on Sunday, the thing you had told him on Saturday, yet remembered every turn of the walks in Sutton House garden—and what flowers grew in every bed. He would forget his breakfast, if Pet did not lead him in to his place, but he knew after fifty years, the fashion of Artemisia's trousseau. First the skimp white satin gown in which she had been presented at court, and in which she hoped to conquer the hearts of her new and formidable

kinsfolk, the feathered turban, the mitts, the silk stockings and white sandals. Then her prayer book, and Belinda Daphne, the doll given her on her third birthday, and her gold neck-chain and locket with her mother's picture in it; and a curl of her bosom friend Lady Betty Arminster's hair, and a copy of the Gentlemen's Magazine for February, 1811, containing *An Address in Rhyme* to Miss A. S. on her *Arrival in Bath*; and a water colour of Sutton House, executed by herself with much assistance from her drawing master. Also, four pounds, seven and four pence, in gold and silver, her India shawl that her uncle William had brought her from Calcutta, and a stuffed paroquet from the same source, which, all through her childish years, had been Belinda's rival in her deepest affections. She was afraid Hendrick might laugh at Belinda and the paroquet, but she could not steel her heart to the parting. Last of all, this practical young person insured Hendrick and herself from starvation on their road to Gretna, by providing half a loaf of plum-cake. Thus equipped, she felt herself competent to face stormy seas and even a stormy father-in-law. But as she stood in the little back hall, with her hand on the latch of the window, she came to a sudden pause, then, putting down her shoes and bundle, felt her way along the walls to the door at the end of the passage. Down another corridor she groped her noiseless way, and out into the old hall where the monks had eaten their black bread and lentils, and

straight to the spot where hung Artemisia's mirror. For one moment she hesitated, conscience warring with desire, but when Hendrick rose from behind the holly bush to seize her, she panted, "There, take that," and thrust the mirror into his hands. It was rightly hers, she argued, since it bore her name. In the fair sweet evening at sea, as the ship sailed into the sunset, she confided to Hendrick, how she sometimes fancied herself that same Artemisia for whom the mirror was wrought, and who so long ago bore it when a bride over strange seas to her husband's home. In pursuit of the fancy, she loved to call Hendrick, Odoardo, or Sir Edward, Knight of St. George.

That early time was what Grandsir loved best to talk about, nor could Pet draw from him any but a vague and confused account of later happenings of how the young couple had gone to his father's home in Schenectady, and then to Hendrick's farm farther to the West, where they built a fair brick house and named it Sutton House, and laid out terraces and gardens after those at the old home in England. And there Pet's father was born and his mother called him the little lord of the manor.

"Why don't we live there now, Grandsir?" was Pet's natural question.

Grandsir's face clouded pitifully and the slow tears filled his old eyes, while he answered pitifully that he didn't know; Dirck had driven him away.

"But how could Dirck drive you and grandmother away?" the child persisted.

"She was dead," said the old man. "Artemisia was dead." He began to cry hopelessly and Pet climbed on his knees and comforted him, and asked him no more questions. But she asked her mother who was Dirck.

"Has your grandfather been talking to you about Dirck?" Mrs. Vanderhooven answered, a little startled, it seemed. "I never heard him so much as mention Dirck's name. I thought he'd forgotten. Dirck was his twin brother."

"He says Dirck drove him from his home!" Pet cried.

"I'll tell you the whole story, Artemisia," her mother said. "You're old enough to hear it now, and you couldn't understand it from Grandsir." Pet, with a fearful joy, composed herself to listen; fearful,—for she knew the story concerned her grandmother's death, and her grandmother was killed, Grandsir had said; joyous—with the joy of childhood in stories and mysteries.

"Your grandfather's house—"

"Sutton House;" Pet murmured to herself.

"—was burned down. One of the farm hands—his name was Edward Day—set it on fire for spite. Madam Vanderhooven ran into the house to save her mirror—that very mirror you make so much of—and she was burned to death."

"My grandmother Artemisia," whispered Pet, aghast.

"Yes, poor thing. She was so young, too—no more than thirty, and your father used to tell me, often, how pretty she was. He was ten years old at the time and he remembered her well. He used to say you'd grow up her very image."

"Was that why Grandsir left the farm, mother?"

"He had to go, for it wasn't his any longer. His father died in Schenectady only two days after the fire, and then it turned out that the title deeds that gave your Grandsir all his land had been burnt in the fire. It seems that your great grandfather had to leave Hendrick his share of the land in his will, but he deeded it to him earlier, when your grandfather brought his wife home. I presume Hendrick was the favourite son. And your grandfather always was kind of high-flown and heedless, and he never had the deeds recorded, as they call it, but when his father gave the papers to him, he threw them straight into his wife's lap and said, 'Take care of them, Artemisia, that's your fortune.' And she kept them, and he never took the trouble to know where they were, till they went up in smoke. So then Dirck got the place, because his father's will left him everything not already disposed of."

"But, mother, the place wasn't Grandsir's father's; it was Grandsir's," little Artemisia cried.

"Yes, but the papers to prove it were burnt," said her mother, with the calm of long submission. Arte-

misia, in tears, was jumping up and down with excitement over unbearable wrong.

"But didn't everybody know it was Grandsir's? Didn't Dirck know? Why didn't Grandsir tell him?" she sobbed.

"Oh, bless you, child, Dirck knew, and everybody knew. But the law wouldn't give your grandfather the place without the papers. He had no proof at all, so Dirck took it. It was the best land in your grandfather's estate, and Dirck had always been mad, so your father said, because Hendrick got it. He didn't offer to give it back, once he got it, Dirck didn't, and your Grandsir and your father were turned out, like beggars."

"Is Dirck alive?" Pet asked with visions of a just God striking him dead, like Ananias, for his iniquities. But her mother answered,

"Oh dear, yes. He comes to town every winter, and lives in one of the biggest houses in Lafayette Place. They're rolling in money, while your father clerked it all his days. But he'd sooner have starved than go to Dirck Vanderhooven for help."

"But don't we have any money at all, mother?" Pet asked.

"We've got what I earn," her mother told her. "Then there's the house, and a little besides. I couldn't take care of the three of us, all by myself. But I make every cent I can sewing. Your father couldn't say I don't try my best."

This, Pet's first glimpse into the ways of the

great world, left her with a profound contempt for that machine of injustice known as the law, a Montague and Capulet hatred of the Lafayette Place Vanderhooven's, and a quite new respect for her hated needle. That mother worked to support her and Grandsir, had never occurred to her. Food was spread thrice a day, she had never questioned any more than Tim, the cat, whence it came. But now to help mother became her ardent ambition. The little devil that knotted the thread and ran off with the thimble was exorcised and triumphantly cast out, till on one proud day her mother said, "I do declare, Pet you're a better hand with your needle than I am."

Pet was eighteen now, pretty and fresh and gay, working hard to ease mother, but finding time for play too, brooding little over the lost glories of her line, but finding life as pleasant to Pet Vanderhooven of the little cottage as it could be to her cousins, the young ladies of Lafayette Place. Grandsir was older, feebler, even more silent. When she went out, as she often did, to help his ineffective hands in the garden, there were no more stories of Artemisia. Save that he would sit for hours with the mirror in his hand, Pet could think that he had forgotten all, as she herself had well nigh forgotten it in the busy interests of her young life.

Then came the day when her mother fell ill. A slight cold, a mere nothing, they thought it, but in three days she was dying. Toward the last her

eyes dwelt in a frightened way on Pet, and she seemed to long to speak, but could not, and passed in silence. Her going left Pet stunned with misery, but the ill fates had not done with her. The day her mother was buried came the lawyer through whom Mrs. Vanderhooven's little income had been paid, to tell Pet that Mr. Vanderhooven continued the free tenancy of the house, and the same allowance he had paid her mother.

"My grandfather?" Pet ejaculated, completely at a loss.

"Your great-uncle, Mr. Dirck Vanderhooven."

To her look of speechless amaze he went on.

"Didn't you know, Miss Vanderhooven, that Mr. Dirck Vanderhooven had made your mother an allowance of twenty dollars a month ever since your father's death, fifteen years ago?"

"Out of our own estate, the magnificent fortune of twenty dollars a month!" Pet blazed forth. "Convey my compliments, if you please, to Mr. Dirck Vanderhooven, and inform him that I have learned for the first time of his generosity and that from this hour I decline to be a beggar on his bounty."

"My dear Miss Vanderhooven," the lawyer protested, "think what you are doing."

"I do think," Pet retorted, though as a matter of fact she did not, she only felt. "I know what I am doing. I know Grandsir and I would rather starve than accept one penny from Mr. Dirck Van-

derhooven. The money he has given us shall all be paid back, he may rest assured. I have no more to say to you, Mr. Cheever."

When Pet assumed the air that had won her grandmother the name of "the haughty madam," there was indeed no more to be said. The very next day, she and Grandsir were installed in two rooms in the very eaves of a narrow house in Bleecker Street, and Mr. Dirck Vanderhooven was richer by two hundred and forty dollars a year.

Heroism is seldom comfortable for the hero, my dears, but it is likely to bear even harder on the hero's family. Poor Grandsir could by no means understand why he must leave his garden plot, his work of fifteen years. He wept like a wronged child, and, with a child's obstinacy, clung by main force to the arbour-post and declined to budge. In despair, Pet told him they must go, because the house was Dirck's. Instantly Grandsir's lamentations ceased, while there came into his face both fear and cunning, a look even more pitiable than his tears.

"We must go, child; we must go this minute," he cried, clutching Pet's arm and peering round to see if perchance Dirck were lurking near. "We must go before Dirck finds us. He drove us away from Sutton House; he'll drive us out of the country if he can."

In the new abode, for weeks after, every time a board creaked, a step sounded in the hallway, Grandsir cringed and whispered "Dirck!" Pet's heart

nearly broke for pity, but she was powerless to lay the ghost of the past she had raised.

Fortunately it was the depth of winter, so that Grandsir did not pine to be out in his garden, but was content with the pots of geraniums and pinks that Pet had brought from the old house. Also, like a child with a loved toy, he played more and more with the mirror. Hour by hour, he would rub up to highest lustre its shining frame; hour by hour he would sit motionless gazing into its grey depths, and he told Pet that he could see Artemisia in the mirror; that she lived there, and when he was all alone she would come out of the glass and speak to him.

It was a pretty fancy, and Pet rejoiced to see that it made Grandsir happy. He talked again and more than ever of Artemisia, till her young grandmother seemed to Pet like one of the girls she knew, so familiar and real had her personality grown. Her presence filled the room; she seemed sometimes more alive than the two living beings who dwelt there.

Pet indeed felt herself by the ghost of her brilliant wilful triumphant namesake. All day long and all the evening, she sewed, sewed, sewed, for not only must she and Grandsir be kept respectable, but she must pay back that twenty dollars a month owed for fifteen years. A Herculean task, truly, but to it Pet set her slender strength with all the spirit of a Hercules.

Her life was a lonely one enough, for she would not spare time for visiting; but it was not unhappy; she was strung too keenly to her purpose to mind poverty or loneliness. She had no thought at all of herself; her life knew only two motives. Dirck Vanderhoooven must be paid off, and Grandsir must be kept happy.

For Grandsir's sake, she put aside her work, one spring day, and, leaving him in the care of a kindly neighbour, went out into the country even as far as Fiftieth Street, to dig him violets. She was tired out and the big market basket weighed a ton by the time she had trudged back to her own door. She set the basket down on the lowest step and sighed as she thought of the steep stairs. It was even at this moment that the hand of fate shoved toward her a young man who had recently come to lodge in the room next to Grandsir's. He was a nice looking young man whose eyes had a habit of following Pet.

"Mayn't I carry up your basket?" he now besought, hat in hand.

"Oh, thank you, sir, but it is *very* heavy." Pet protested ingenuously. The young man's bashfulness vanished before her confusion.

"Then I must certainly carry it," he replied. On the way up, Pet lifted the wet papers and showed him her treasures; he asked where they came from and she described her ramble. He remarked that he had seen her several times before; she answered

carelessly that she thought she had seen him (she had encountered him on the stairs no longer ago than that morning). By the time they reached her door he had confided to her that he was a banker's clerk and his name was Eric Parker.

Pet, standing on the threshold, lifted her shy eyes to his. It struck her that the fear of Dirck's footstep might be lifted from Grandsir if he could be made to understand that it was this Mr. Eric Parker whose tread rang so often on the stairs.

"Would you like to come in and see my grandfather?" she asked. "Grandsir's quite old, Mr. Parker, and he doesn't always understand very well. But you won't appear to notice it?"

Eric promised eagerly, and she presented him to "my grandfather."

Grandsir, when visitors came, had but the one formula, whether to a stranger or to a friend of twenty years. "I don't know you, do I?" "Yes, Grandsir, it's Millie Kennedy," Pet would say. Then Grandsir would observe, with a recrudescence of former gallantry, "If you came oftener, my dear, I should know you better." But a moment later he would reiterate helplessly, "I don't know you, do I?"

He looked now at Eric Parker, in his old puzzled way. Then came a difference. He spoke with conviction, "I've *seen* you before."

"Very likely sir. I live in the house," Eric answered politely, though, for all chances of being seen

by Grandsir, who never left his room, he might as well have lived in Kamtschatka.

"Why, of course I know you. You work on my farm," was Grandsir's amazing remark.

"No, Grandsir," interposed Pet, "Mr. Parker lives in New York. He was never on the farm."

"I beg your pardon, sir. I must have confused you with someone else," the old man apologised.

"A very natural mistake, I'm sure sir," said the courteous young man and the subject was dropped. But the next time Eric came (which was the following evening) Grandsir hailed him instantly as a messenger from the farm and asked how deep the snow was in the country, and how the stock were getting through the winter. And Eric, sitting down by the old man, fell into the game, answering as best he could all Grandsir's eager questions and inventing volumes of misinformation about the farm.

"That was very kind," Pet said to him in a low voice when he bade her good night. "It's a pious fraud, I'm sure, Mr. Parker. He did enjoy it so."

"Anything to save you, Miss Pet,"—Eric answered, ardently.

"Miss Vanderhooven," she corrected, blushing. Eric started.

"Vanderhooven? Are you a kin to the Vanderhoovens in Lafayette Place?" he asked.

Pet was ill-pleased. "No, no, no," she said. "I am not the rich Vanderhooven."

inwardly, while replying with all the ancestral grand manner.

"We are the poor Vanderhoovens. We don't claim the slightest kinship with the Vanderhoovens of Lafayette Place."

The presumptuous youth declined to be crushed to earth by the Artemisian manner. On the contrary, he was delighted, he said, that she was not related to those Vanderhoovens.

What he had against the Lafayette Place Vanderhoovens she knew not, but the fact of his animosity endeared the youngster amazingly to Pet. The possession of common enemies is one of the dearest of all ties that bind—a tie far stronger than that of common friends. This, and his kindness to Grandsir, made Eric ever welcome, and Pet even allowed him to coax her out of doors on pleasant evenings. Before many weeks he and Pet, sitting on a secluded bench in Battery Park, concluded that they were made for each other. They had been repeating this with very slight variations for an hour or so when Eric asked Pet incidentally what her name was.

"Vanderhooven, the poor Vanderhooven," she answered, for he made fun of her fierce pride.

"Never mind, it shall be Parker soon. But I mean your first name dearest. I suppose your sponsors in baptism didn't christen you Pet, did they? Not that they could have found any name half so fit."

"Of course I have a name," Pet protested with dignity. "But it is too fine for every day, so Mother called me Pet. My real name is Artemisia."

He started away from her, dropping her hand.

"Artemisia Vanderhooven!"

"Yes, I was named for my grandmother, the Lady Artemisia Sutton." Pet's voice lingered lovingly on the name.

He sprang up, seeming to tower over her.

"Then your grandfather is Hendrick Vanderhooven. I might have guessed—But you told me you weren't related to those Vanderhoovens."

She rose too. Something, she knew not what, was hideously amiss.

"We have quarreled with them, and we have nothing to do with them. But my grandfather is Hendrick Vanderhooven."

"And my father was Edward Day."

"The man who killed my grandmother?"

The turf under her feet rose and fell like the waves in the bay, and the trees swayed like masts. Pet caught hold of the bench to steady herself.

"Eric, you're raving. Your name's Parker—"

"My father changed his name and left his home. But the stigma followed him everywhere till he died of the shame of it."

"Your father," Pet whispered, as if it were too hideous to say aloud. "And you came to me!"

"I didn't know——"

"The name of Vanderhooven should have been enough!"

"But I loved you before I knew your name, Pet." Her anger melted like mist.

"O Eric! O my dear!"

He would have taken her in his arms but she cried passionately, "no, no! Don't touch me!" And then, as he stood chilled by her revulsion, her mood turned again, and she cried

"Eric, perhaps your father was innocent."

"Innocent?" his son repeated bitterly. "He was as innocent as I am—but for all that your grandfather put the rope round his neck to hang him to the nearest tree. And that's the man—that Hendrick Vanderhooven, to whom I've brought roses."

"Are you sorry you were kind to that old man?"

"No," answered Eric, probably untruthfully. "But I never would have darkened his door, had I known—Good-by, Pet."

Her love for him lent her patience that was not hers by nature.

"Wait, Eric," she said, as gently as the meekest of maidens. "If your father was innocent, we'll prove it."

"What, after forty years?"

"The truth must come out in the end, else one couldn't believe in God," answered Pet piteously.

"You know, Eric, I've been brought up to execrate your father's name. Then, if I, Artemisia Vanderhooven's granddaughter, can believe him in-

nocent on your bare word, won't you help me prove it to others?"

His young spirit caught hope.

"God bless you, my darling. We will prove it."

They sat down again then, side by side like friends, while Eric told the story. He knew it but too well. He had heard it from his father many bitter times.

"Father was the son of a farmer living eight or ten miles from Sutton Place, and he hired out to your grandfather for the harvest. He was only twenty years old and he had never been away from home before, and he'd never been in a house where the family didn't eat with the hands. The Vanderhoovens didn't, though your grandfather worked beside the men in the fields; but he and Madame Vanderhooven and their little boy—that must have been your father, I suppose,—had their meals in a parlour by themselves. Father didn't like that, and he began to comment on it to the men, and called it stuck-up and English, and he got into a regular spreadeagle speech against the English, when the madam came out and heard him. She took the wind out of his sails in a way that made him feel a fool and a booby before all the men, and then she told him he must apologise or go. He went, but he threatened her he'd get even with her.

"Father said he didn't mean anything in the world by that speech; he was so angry he didn't know what he was saying. Off he marched with his ole over his shoulder, and he'd put five or six

miles between him and Sutton House, when he remembered that he'd left his purse with every penny he had in the world, under the pillow. He turned round and went back to the house. It was noon by that time, and there wasn't a soul to be seen about the place. The men were working too far from home to return for dinner, and the women had all gone to carry it to them. He sneaked up to his room and found his purse, and he thought, coming down, he said, how easy it would be to take some of their silver, or spoil their pictures. But he swore he never touched one thing, but walked straight out of that house and on his way again.

"When he was about a mile from the house, he saw Madam Vanderhooven coming along with her son. Father said if she'd been alone he'd have faced her and asked her pardon, but he couldn't bear to humble himself before the boy, so he dropped down behind some bushes. She and the lad were busy talking, and they never saw him, and passed by. Afterward, he wished to God he had stopped her.

"He walked on another mile, to where the road went up over a hill, and on the crest he turned and looked back and saw flames bursting out of the windows of Sutton House. He knew one man would be powerless to help, so he raced along over the fields to the harvesters, shouting that Sutton House was on fire, and that Madam was there.

"While he was saying the words, up ran the boy from the other direction, to tell the same tale. He

and his mother had seen the fire; she had run on to the house. When the men, father and everybody, came up, the whole place was in flames and no sign of Madam Vanderhooven. Her husband called for volunteers to find her—and the first to spring into the fire at his side was Edward Day. They were together when they found her lying on the floor in the little panelled parlour, with an old looking-glass clasped in her arms.”

“Oh, poor lady,” Pet breathed. “It was my mirror.”

“The fire had spared her,” he went on, “she seemed to have been suffocated by the smoke. They worked over her till finally she opened her eyes and said the one word *Edward*, and died.

“Instantly the cry rose that Edward Day had murdered her—he had fired the house. In the panelled room scattered straw, not quite destroyed pointed to arson. Edward Day had quarrelled with the mistress and then had hung about the neighbourhood all day. Indeed the boy—your father—bore witness to seeing him hiding by the bushes in the road, though his mother had laughed at him for thinking it. Some one brought a rope, and Hendrick Vanderhooven put it round my father’s neck.

“Nobody listened to a word father said. They were like mad wolves in their fury. But when that rope touched him, father with one plunge freed himself from the men who held him. The crowd was in a circle around him. He could not possibly escape,

and they waited to see what he would do. He went over to where Madam Vanderhooven's body lay on the ground, and he lifted the cloth somebody had thrown over it. She wasn't disfigured, he said, and she looked just as quiet and pretty as if she were sleeping, except that her eyes were wide open, staring straight up at him.

There was a sort of groan from the crowd when he went toward her, and they surged forward as if to stop him. But he knelt down by her, and put one hand on her forehead and one on her breast and said

"I swear before God I never harmed her or her house. Boys, could I touch her if I'd brought her to her death?"

"Oh, Eric," Pet cried. "They must have let him go then."

"They gave up the notion of lynching him. He was tried for arson, convicted, and served his term. I am a convict's son, Miss Vanderhooven."

"He was innocent, Eric," Pet cried quickly. "He must have been innocent." But after her brave assurance she shivered.

He broke a long silence "Well, Pet?" She rose, with a strangled sob.

"I don't know, Eric—I don't know. Take me home."

It was late, and her first task was to help Grand-sir to his bed. She kissed him with a mother's tenderness for his helplessness; and put out the light. Then as if she had no strength left, she sank down

in Grandsir's chair, in misery none the less wretched that it made no sound. In Eric's presence, swayed by her love for him, by his own firm belief, she had not hesitated to champion his father's innocence. Now, alone in the dark, she wavered. Grandsir had thought him guilty, her father had thought him guilty, Artemisia herself had said in her dying breath *Edward*. Was it possible all of these, the court itself, had been wrong?

Whatever his father had been, she could never cease to love Eric. She could not blame him for his father's sin. But well she knew Grandsir would have no such charity. "I would never have darkened his doors, had I known," Eric had said, nor would Hendrick Vanderhooven, had he known, ever have received Eric Day. That Grandsir did not know, need never know, changed the situation no whit. She should never tell him—of what use to open old wounds,—but loyalty constrained her to act as if he knew. Hendrick Vanderhooven's child could be no wife, no friend even, of Eric Day.

It made no difference in Pet's mind that the crime, if crime it was, had happened forty years before; that neither Eric nor she was born till the event was all but forgotten; that Eric and she were guiltless of wrong, young, with their lives all before them. Pet had lived all her days in the past; Sutton House was as much a part of her life as if she had dwelt there in the flesh; her grandmother Artemisia's cause was her own. She could not separate her fortunes from

her family's; with a feudal loyalty she walked as her forbears had walked. And Eric, too, nourished on the tale of his father's wrongs; for him also was the dead past a living thing. He, no more than the girl, could cut loose from the root whence he had sprung. They had walked home in silence. Despite their tenderness for each other, which no sin of others could kill, the past had risen like a wall between them. They both felt it to be so, and had parted without even touching hands.

And yet, and yet, Pet's heart yearned over him. She dropped on her knees to pray for help, for light.

Where was light to come from after these forty years?

Before her, on the table where Grandsir had put it down, lay Artemisia's mirror. The girl bent over it. In the dim starlight a ghost of her face looked back at her, as Grandsir said his Artemisia looked at him. "Oh, grandmother, have pity on me and tell me," Pet's heart implored. But the face had vanished from the mirror. Nothing was there save the reflection of an empty room. She lifted her hand to push away the glass, when of a sudden, with a cry, she held still. For while the room about her was midnight dark, the room in the mirror showed a band of sunshine across the floor—while the real room was white-washed and furnished with deal, the room in the mirror was panelled and beamed in oak, and the furniture was all of teakwood. The polished floor was covered with bear and panther

skins. On the mantel-shelf stood jars of roses. One side of the room showed a book-case; the other a tall secretary with closed doors. The room was deserted, yet even as she gazed the door opened for the hasty entrance of a gentleman in riding dress. Some elusive yet insistent likeness between the vigorous young face of the cavalier and that tremulous dim-eyed mask on the pillow behind her told the watcher that thus her grandfather had looked forty years before.

He moved straight to the secretary, flung open its unlocked doors, took out one by one every paper in its drawers and pigeon holes, examined it, and returned it to its proper place. Twice he went through the desk, patiently, carefully, minutely. With his riding crop he sounded for secret drawers, in vain. Then changing his field of search, he opened the book-case, removed book by book, ruffled the leaves over, shook them vainly, and put them back.

At first, his movements had been controlled, without haste and without nervousness. But as he continued his fruitless quest a feverish hurry overtook him. His hands shook. He started once or twice, as if at a noise without. The colour came and went in his cheeks. In a very frenzy of search, he tapped the walls for secret cubbies, fell on his knees to pry up the bricks of the hearth.

All at once he sprang up, opened the door a crack, and stood for several minutes listening. Then the

danger, if such it were, passed. He flung the door wide and strode out and up the passage. For a time the room remained quiet. At length, the same visitor came back, empty-handed, scowling-browed. For what had Grandsir been looking, the loss of which had brought that look to his face?

For a moment he stood motionless, a sullen baffled figure whose despair suddenly before her eyes was changed to malevolent triumph. Abruptly he left the room and came back with an armful of straw, returning for more and again more. What was Grandsir doing? He was mad. No, the mirror was mad, lying. Grandsir was working in the fields that day; he did not fire the house.

As if she had heard it spoken aloud, the answer flashed to Pet. Dirck!

He had ridden from Schenectady with the news of his father's extremity. He found the house deserted, and he remembered the title deeds. Destroy them, and he was master of Sutton House. Even as the thought jumped into her brain the man knelt over the straw and struck a match. A second later, he leapt from the casement, leaving it open for the wind to fan the fire. Flames shot up licking the walls, then smoke rolled thick, hiding all. Pet sat sick and helpless. She must cry out, she must give warning—but this house had been burned forty years!

The smoke wreaths rolled aside as the door opened, admitting a blast of clearer air. Into the midst of

the furnace rushed a little figure in a white frock, with dark curls flying, horrified dark eyes looking straight toward Pet. "Oh, my dear!" Pet cried in agony, starting forward with eager arms outstretched to save her—and found herself standing alone in the grey dawn, her cold hands clutching the grey glass of the mirror.

That it was a fevered dream she had no choice but to believe. Yet, unlike dreams, the memory of it did not fade as the hours went by, the impression did not blur. All day long the vision hung on Pet like an incubus, till at dusk it took her by the throat and forced her to Dirck Vanderhooven's door.

Sometimes Chance, ashamed of her slipshod ways, rouses herself to outdo the very prince of diplomats. Mr. Dirck Vanderhooven was at home. The servant, a green country maid, more willing than discreet, conducted the visitor straight to his library door, murmured, "A lady to see you, sir," and left them alone together.

Mr. Dirck Vanderhooven was seated near the window, reading by the fading daylight. Pet saw how like he was to Grandsir, and how unlike. He was straight and vigorous—he looked twenty years younger than the bowed meek figure at home. Yet not so; on second glance there was no such look of youth about Dirck Vanderhooven as still shone from Hendrick's mild eyes. Dirck's face was lined, contracted with mean cares, old.

Evidently, he had not heard her.

But presently some finer sense than hearing told him of a presence in the room, and he lifted his eyes and saw her. He recoiled with the blanched face of one who sees death itself staring him in the face. His speechless lips shaped themselves to a name.

"Artemisia!"

"You fired Sutton House," said Artemisia's ghost to him.

"The house was empty. I never meant to kill you, Artemisia," he struggled to answer, and fell at Artemisia's feet.

She left his own people weeping over him and fled home like a criminal in the night. She had taken it upon herself to mete out punishment to the wicked; she had played at being God. And her punishment had come in the awful completeness of her success.

A little crowd of women hung about her own door, which broke into murmurs as she approached. "Ah, the poor young lady! The poor thing." Eric, quiet and pale, came out of Grandsir's room, and put his arm about her.

"He's gone, dear heart. I heard him through the wall of my room suddenly cry out, and fall. When I ran to him, he was dead."

Eric had laid Grandsir on the bed, covering him tenderly, all injuries forgotten. On the floor lay the mirror, shattered.

"He must have been holding it in his hand when

he died," Eric said softly. "What I heard him cry was 'Artemisia.'"

Pet knelt and kissed the wan cheek. Eric lifted the mirror to put it in the dead hand when his eye fell on a folded paper, freed from its wall of glass when the mirror broke. "I Pieter Vanderhooven, make over and convey——." Safe, these fifty years, in Artemisia's mirror lay Artemisia's fortune!

He was at Pet's side, but before he could tell her, she lifted her eyes—eyes wet for present sorrows, but shining with hope of brightness to come.

"Eric, he died with her name on his lips, and don't you see, she died speaking his? 'Edward'—it's on the mirror in your hand, there. It was what she called her husband for his dearest name. She wasn't accusing anybody. She wasn't thinking of revenge. She was just thinking of love."

* * * * *

"Now, Mr. Goddard," challenged the Dame, "I suppose you will say that isn't true."

"No, Miss Blake, my sole comment will be that your truth is stranger than my fiction."

"But you acknowledge it is truth?"

"Far be it from me to question it," answered Mr. Goddard, meekly. "But I'd give a good deal if I could only lie half as well as your chief character."

"Not Artemisia?" demanded one of the girls.

"No, no," responded Harold. "Like the Mirror. I'd always thought that a looking-glass was a sort

of inanimate G. W., but now I see that it is human like the rest of us."

"At least they only lie on impulse; never on reflection," suggested some one.

"Excuse me," contradicted a man well beyond the vanity of years, "I am certain my mirror lies daily as to the number of my wrinkles, for unless I put on my glasses, not one can I see."

"Be thankful it shows you anything," comforted one of the young men, "for I'm going to tell you of something which happened to a friend of mine. The truth is, Mrs. Goddard," he added, "this historical story business is being worked so to death, that it's time we had another sort, and so I'll tell you one of the old fashion kind that took imagination, as well as industry—so pay heed and take warning, all ye here assembled, to the tale of: DAWSON'S DILEMMA."

DAWSON'S DILEMMA

IT was a fine bracing autumn morning. A day when the right sort of young man's fancy ought to turn to thoughts of golf, but despite the fact that Dawson was in most respects the right sort of a young man, that worthy person's thoughts turned to nothing of the kind. Unfortunately Dawson had dined with a number of choice spirits the night before and the combination of late hours, tobacco smoke, and various other things, had brought about the inevitable post-prandial consciousness that he had a head upon his shoulders.

For an hour he had lain awake in his bed trying to persuade himself to get up and go about the business of the day, but the ache in his eyes and the rapid pulsation of his brain, and the glassy feeling in the back of his neck were too much for his powers of persuasion. Finally however, by a strong effort of the will he rose up, took his tubbing like a man and prepared to shave. The tubbing refreshed him somewhat, so that he felt quite equal to that unhappy task which makes even the new woman rejoice that she is not like unto man in all respects. He wished that it were not necessary to shave, but a very cursory examination of his chin made by passing his hand gently over that useful member proved the expediency of so doing, and with a sigh he set about

it, and it was then that the first incident in the narrative I am about to set before you occurred.

As Dawson stood before the glass and applied the lather to his face he caught a roguish twinkle in the reflected glance of his own eyes. He paused for an instant and his brow contracted somewhat, as much as to say that he did not wholly approve of that other self as reflected in the mirror. How could he? No sane creature would have invited such a headache as he had and philosophise as he might he could not reason away the fact that the headache was a logical conclusion based upon premisses of a thoroughly substantial nature. -It was not in the nature of things, however, that Dawson should disapprove of himself very strongly or for any prolonged space of time. Hence it was not long before the stern look in his own eyes was driven away by a repetition of the roguish look in the mirrored optics. His brow relaxed and around the corners of his lips there hovered that suggestion of a smile which he had not found wholly useless in his efforts to conquer the world in the past and inadvertently he ejaculated, addressing his mirrored self:

"You're a great chap, Billie, and what you'll do next I don't know any more than I know what you do when you go out of that reflection of my door back of you."

He turned away for a moment to sharpen his razor.

The clock on the mantel was striking the fifth stroke of the hour of nine and simultaneously with this, Dawson was astonished to hear from the depths of the mirror the words rather contemptuously spoken:

"If one's reflection were unfortunate enough to be the mere slave of the more material substance, how few self-respecting reflections there would be in this world, to be sure!"

"What the devil!" cried Dawson, putting down the razor and completely forgetting the lather upon his face in his astonishment for the moment. As he gazed back again into the mirror, he was still further astonished to discover that his reflected self therein instead of showing him as he stood, was sitting down on the reflection of the small rocking-chair back of him, gazing with a cynical smile upon him who had fondly presumed that he was the original of the combination. "What's that you said?" he demanded, his gaze growing intense.

"I said," replied the reflected Dawson with a calmness that amounted almost to contempt, "that if men's mirrored selves were mere slaves to the substance there would be very few self-respecting reflections in the world. If you can't grasp the idea I'll say it for the third time, only it's a dreadful bore to have to converse one's conversation over and over again in order that it may reach the comprehension of the dull-witted."

"Do you mean to say," demanded Dawson, his

eyes growing big, "that you lead a life independent from that which I lead?"

"Independent—I should hope so," replied the Reflection. "I don't mind doing what you do in this room. You perform the details of your toilet rather well, and I am satisfied with the way you do things here, but if you think that when I go outside of that door I behave so like an ass as you've been known to do you are mightily mistaken."

Dawson was properly insulted, and his impulse was to hurl his shaving stick at his reflection but the latter grinned maddeningly at him from the depths of the mirror and grimly observed:

"Good work old boy. Smash the glass if you want to. It may please you and it won't hurt me, but really I wouldn't be so foolish if I were you; it's not worth while. What's the use of destroying a glass that has cost you seventy-five dollars to satisfy a grudge against a creature you cannot by any possibility reach?"

Dawson paused. Whether he forgot the absurdity of the situation for the moment or realised the good sense of his counterpart I do not know. At any rate he paused in his wrath, and meekly asked an explanation.

"Oh, I only mean," said the Reflection, "that when after performing all the details of our toilet in the morning, and you go out of your door, and I emerge into my world through mine, I am no longer required to merely imitate your every action

and so I say therefore, I lead an independent life, the life you ought to lead, and never make an ass of myself except it be for a good cause."

"I've got you there," retorted Dawson triumphantly. "You are my slave, for wherever I go you go also whether you will or not. That is shown by the fact that if I choose to go to the club and stand before the mirror there you can't for the life of you keep from turning up. If you can, why do you always dog my footsteps? Independent life? Independent Tommy-Rot!"

"I thought you'd say that," said his Reflection, exasperatingly calm. "Just because I chaperone you in a public place and try to see that you behave yourself properly and don't unnecessarily make a donkey of yourself, you think it's because I have to. As a matter of fact it's pure philanthropy on my part, and time and time again I have saved you from going home from the club in a state of intoxication, by merely calling your attention to your face, and you've been able to see at a glance into what you've fondly supposed were your mirrored eyes, that you'd had as much as you could stand. Isn't that so?"

"Yes, it is," Dawson admitted, "but what does that prove?"

"It proves," said the Reflection, "simply that instead of being your slave, I'm your mentor, and your invariable willingness to obey even so slight a thing as a suggestion on my part, would seem to

show that if there is a slave anywhere it is not on my side of the glass."

A prolonged silence ensued, during which Dawson rubbed his eyes and forehead after the manner of one who is endeavouring to massage his brain with the possible hope of extracting from its folds some idea as to how the strange things which had happened had come about. The more he thought of the situation the less it pleased him. He found it difficult to believe in the reality of all that had happened, yet the alternative was not pleasant. It had seemed real enough, yet if it were not, what could he think of the condition of his mind? What in very truth could he claim for his sanity? On the other hand granting the reality of the situation, was it likely to prove a pleasing possibility that wherever he might go this quicksilver mentor must follow, like a detective, listening to his every word, watching his acts with lynx-eyed persistence? This thought aroused some irritation in Dawson's breast which was not at all allayed by a voluntary remark which issued from the Reflection that he'd like to know what basis Dawson had for believing that it was he after all who was the substance, and not the reflection.

"How do I know?" cried Dawson jumping to his feet and approaching the glass menacingly.

"That's what I said," returned the other. "Suppose for an instance that I should claim to be the real Dawson, and should assert that you were noth-

ing but *my* reflection, how could you prove that I was wrong?"

"Bosh!" cried Dawson angrily, and then he inflated his truly magnificent chest and with both fists clenched thumped it vigorously. "Anyone with half an eye can see that that's solid, and no vain mockery of a reflection," he said.

"I will quote you," said the Reflection with a grin of exceeding derision. "I will repeat your word 'bosh,' and add, pooh! You are justly proud of your chest, but my dear fellow, how about mine?"

The mocking image thereupon thrust its chest forward in exact imitation of Dawson and with equal vigour began to thump upon it in no wise differently from the manner of the unhappy mortal before him.

"Who shall say that my chest is a mere shell?" the Reflection said as he did this. "A mere reflection of your own—the shadow and not the substance? Sir, you are not the only solid in the universe."

"There are other methods of proof," said Dawson sullenly. He liked the situation less every minute. "I've got friends. I could leave the question of my substantiality to them."

"And do you know what they would reply?" asked the Reflection with a chuckle as he reflected upon the many possible answers Dawson's friends might make to such an interrogation. "They would possibly say that you needed a rest, and some of them would suggest that you'd better try the Keeley

Cure while there was yet time. You'd look well going to your friend Baker for instance, and saying, 'See here, Jack, I've just had a dispute with my reflection up in the shaving glass. It says it's me!' What do you think Baker would say to that? I think myself that he would suggest a committee to inquire into your sanity."

Dawson's uneasiness increased visibly and his agitation must have become painful to witness, for his Reflection turned its back upon him and walking to the window, stood gazing out upon the busy street below. Dawson's agitation gave place to a sudden outburst of anger and he cried imperatively:

"We'll see about that, my friend! Just to bring the point to a straightforward issue, I command you to return here where I can see your face and so finish my shave!"

"Very well," said the Reflection turning from the window and leaning gracefully against the bureau. "Since you choose to be foolish and arbitrary about it I will consent to making the issue. I should have assisted you, Dawson, in the completion of your toilet with all my heart, for I really like you and admire your rather rare ambition to keep yourself always well groomed. If all men were as careful of their personal appearance as you are the human race would be rather more pleasing to the human eye. But since you choose to play the Hector with me I will gratify you by putting up a little Hector of my own. I'll see you hanged before I will stand

face to face with you. No sir, not even that you may rid yourself of the twenty-four hours' growth of beard upon your otherwise classic chin, which, I regret to observe does not add very much to the beauty of your countenance."

With this parting fling Dawson was dismayed to see his Reflection put on its collar, tie, waist coat and coat, wind up the semblance of its watch, seize a hat from the knob of the brass bed-post, wink smilingly back at him and disappear through the reflected door-way, slamming it with such violence after him that the mirror itself shook visibly.

For the first time in his life Dawson went to business that morning unshaven, and with his tie arranged about his neck in a most disorderly fashion, for from top to bottom of the house there was to be found nowhere, cracked or otherwise, any mirror that would return to him his counterfeit presentment.

On leaving the house Dawson walked rapidly down the street. To say that he was nervous is a pitifully weak description of his condition. But a few moments in the crisp air of the morning, restored him somewhat, and from thinking about his mental state he came to worry about that lesser thing, his personal appearance. Realising the possible condition of his neck-wear he decided to take his mirrored self by surprise in the large plate glass windows of the department-store on the corner, and so correct whatever shortcomings his dress might present. This was a substitute for

a mirror which in the course of his occasional wanderings up and down the many shopping streets of New York he had observed was popular and apparently quite satisfactory to such suburban ladies as desired to see how they looked after emerging from the overcrowded trains which daily carry into town the thousands of shoppers who come to expend up-town that which has been earned downtown. He was, however, doomed to disappointment. The Reflection-Dawson was not to be caught napping by any such feminine subterfuge and declined to respond to his passing. The result was that Dawson was compelled to go his way with the uneasy feeling that he was not looking his best. Fortune favoured him in one respect, however, in so far as his tie was concerned, for upon the elevated train he encountered his friend Wilkins of Kings Bridge whose first remark to him was:

“ Good Lord, Dawson, who tied your tie? ”

Whereupon, Dawson hitherto impeccable as to his dress, seeing his chance to rectify a portion of his disorder at least, with a mock show of withering contempt, grasped one end of his scarf, jerked it loose, and throwing his head back, retorted sarcastically.

“ If you don't like it, Wilkins, suppose you tie it yourself,” which Wilkins promptly did, much to Dawson's inward relief, though outwardly he was calmly contemptuous of Wilkins and all his suburban crew.

"Thanks," said he drily. "I always said you'd make a good valet, Wilkins. If you ever get fired from your position at the bank, come to me, and I'll let you be my man." Which remark I think was very ungrateful, but gratitude after all is not to be expected of a man, so fearfully put upon as Dawson had been that morning.

At the office, fortunately, Dawson found a great pressure of work requiring immediate attention, becoming absorbed in which he shortly forgot both his aching brow, his tie and the disquieting episode of the early morning. One o'clock found him still busy, when a call by telephone brought him an invitation to take luncheon with one of his clients at the Savarin, in the room above-stairs. Dawson, suddenly realising that he was hungry, promptly accepted, and twenty minutes later found himself seated at one of the smaller tables of the ladies' café *vis-à-vis* to his most valient client, Colonel Judson, a robber Baron of the Southern Pacific System, as the Western newspapers delighted to call him, and be it said as good a chap as was ever a pirate. Colonel Judson was, in many respects, the most lucrative of Dawson's clients. It was their habit to talk over the Colonel's business complications, and possible remedies therefor at the luncheon table, because the Colonel was too busy at other times to attend to such trivial details as law-suits, whether they involved millions, or thousands. Those who have lunched in this charming annex

to the Café Savarin will possibly remember what Dawson had not thought of when he accepted the invitation; that its walls in lieu of paper, or *papier-maché*, or other painted decorations, have placed upon almost every inch of the available mural space, plate-glass mirrors of the most transcendent quality. One can almost see the future in these mirrors, so quick are they. As I have already said Dawson had also forgotten the little incident of the morning completely—in fact he was normal at this hour—and as he sat there smothering his oysters in horse-radish, paprika, tabasco sauce, and such other condiments as the table afforded, he was blissfully unconscious of the horrid fact that his Reflection was still off on strike. Fortunately, too, Colonel Judson was so absorbed in the complications of the moment, to confer about which he had summoned Dawson, that he did not observe the uncanny condition of affairs any more than did the hero of this tale. Nor is it likely that two men so thoroughly taken up with other matters than their mirrored selves, would, in the course of the luncheon, have observed the fact that one of them made no impression upon the mirror at his side, had not one of the accomplished French waiters of the establishment in the very midst of one of the Colonel's most important confidences, forgotten that he was paid to serve, and not to see. The Parisian person who chanced to be the hero of this paragraph, forgot his duties utterly. It was evident that he was not a born waiter—but a made

one taken in, temporarily—a waiter with emotions beyond his place—one who would eat a confection he happened to like before he would serve it. The person involved, dropped with a loud crash, first a tray full of attractive edibles, and next himself to his knees, pointing meanwhile with vociferous exclamations of terror at the mirror at Dawson's side, which as I have already shown, failed in spite of its transcendent merit to render back that which had been given unto it. On the instant Dawson realised what had happened. The observant waiter had discovered his temporarily-forgotten secret, and it had driven him mad!

"This is a pretty howdy-do," Dawson muttered to himself. "What the devil will the Colonel think if he sees it! I think I'd better get out of this." Which as the Frenchman still continued, with many a shrugging of his shoulders, and piteous uplifting of his eyes to a Merciful Providence, Dawson found it easy to do, excusing himself on the ground that "somebody ought to call an ambulance," as if he were the only person capable of the task.

As he rushed to the door he realised the further embarrassment of his position in that he was unceremoniously deserting Colonel Judson. To go back, however, was impossible. Fortunately the Colonel was of the same mind and followed him closely with the suggestion that they have their luncheon served down stairs in the main café, where, he understood, the waiters were moderately sane. All became

serene once more; that is apparently so, for it would be idle to say that Dawson's calm and unruffled exterior was in anywise indicative of the actual condition of his soul.

At any rate he pulled through the ordeal without disaster, and when he and the Colonel parted at four o'clock in the afternoon, Dawson threw himself down upon the couch in his office library utterly broken, in body and in spirit.

An hour's nap which blissfully was dreamless, restored him sufficiently to enable him to walk up town to his club, where whatever might happen he intended to get the shave he had lost in the privacy of one of the club bedrooms, where the barber could shave him without the necessity of his sitting before a mirror.

He walked briskly up Broadway and as the twilight faded into the darkness of night he paused to look into the windows of a prominent jeweller's shop in Union Square, where gems of many kinds, in gorgeous settings, flashed brilliantly beneath the glare of the electric lights.

"What a beautiful display," Dawson thought as he stood there drinking in the magnificence before him, and then he saw that which was more delightful to his eyes than all that lay within, nay, more than all the riches of Golconda or the treasures of Monte Cristo, spread in his lap, could possibly have been. That which he saw was his own Reflection, which had all day been denied him, returned to him, indul-

gent if not repentant, for it smiled upon him genially, with a smile which showed no regret whatsoever.

If Dawson could have clasped the thing in his arms, and smothered it with fraternal caresses, I am inclined to think he would have done so, but of course this was impossible. The heavy French plate-glass intervened. So he contented himself with a smiling welcome and the heartfelt ejaculation:

“By Jove, old chap, I never was so glad to see anybody in all my life.”

And the Reflection apparently shared in the joys of the reunion, for even as Dawson showed his delight at the restoration, so did the Reflection, and, be it added, with almost slavish imitation.

For a moment they stood there gazing into each other's eyes, as if delighted, when suddenly the Reflection with a wink and a nod of his head to Dawson's left, called his attention to a ragged figure at his side. The fellow was one of those unfortunate persons to whom it is the custom to refer as the flotsam and jetsam of society; human wrecks upon the sea of life whose mission it is to wander ever on with no hope of satisfaction. He, even as Dawson had been doing, was gazing with wide open eyes, and with heaven only knows what thoughts, upon the marvellous display of riches within.

Dawson glanced at him with a closer scrutiny than perhaps he would have accorded him had not the Reflection called his attention to his chance companion. The other noting it returned a single de-

fiant glance and slunk away and was soon lost in the crowds which were hurrying to and fro.

"Well," said Dawson as the fellow disappeared. "What about him? I don't find him particularly interesting."

"Another exhibit to prove that point of slavishness or rather the lack of it which you so foolishly raised this morning. Why do you suppose," said the Reflection "that his Reflection on my side of the glass, being a slave, as you contend, did not instantly do that which you and I know the master would have commanded had he possessed the power? Why do these jewels, any one of which would represent a fortune beyond his wildest hopes, still remain here a constant source of temptation to thousands of others like him? If he were a slave that tramp's Reflection would have swiped every jewel in sight."

Dawson was floored and he knew it. But his usual readiness of retort stood him in good stead.

"I rather think," said he, "that he was afraid of you."

The Reflection laughed. "You're a great Dawson," it said. "I think you would better hurry up town to the Club and get that long-lost shave, if you don't want to be hailed as Rip Van Winkle when you appear at Miss Robertson's for dinner to-night."

"Jove," cried Dawson, looking hurriedly at his watch. "Thanks to you and your infernal inde-

pendence, which I frankly grant you from this time on, I'd forgotten all about Miss Robertson and her dinner. So long old chap." And he waved his hand at his Reflection in the jeweller's window. The Reflection burst out into a hearty laugh and replied:

"Oh, no my dear boy. I'm going to dine thereabouts myself, and if about the middle of that dinner to-night you will only look through the buffet mirror at the end of the Robertson's dining room, you will see me dining with a rather attractive young woman myself. I don't know about you, but we're engaged."

"You are rushing things," said Dawson. "You'll excuse me for saying it," he added good naturedly "but I think you're a little bit too d——d independent. I don't mind your refusing to follow me, but I'm hanged if I like being anticipated in that way."

The Reflection smiled pleasantly and replied:

"If you'll only live up to what I've anticipated in your behalf, you'll be a very happy man, Dawson. It wouldn't be a bad idea as I told you at the outset if you would flatter me with your imitation. I thought I'd tell you about my engagement though I didn't intend to when we started in, because in spite of your hot temper, you're dead slow. Dead slow, Dawson, I repeat it. Yet as jealous as Othello and as irritable; and it may be that to-night in looking at myself and my companion at dinner you may

observe me doing certain things which will arouse your ire and yet which even now you might be doing if it were not that when it comes to making love a snail could give you points. Whatever you may see me doing, keep quiet, and if you get the chance go and do likewise."

"How can I?" said Dawson. "Mrs. Robertson will of course be present. How shall I manage her?"

"Dawson," said the Reflection, "there are certain things in this world that men have to do for themselves. I've got all I can do managing the old lady on my side of the glass without looking after those similarly advanced in years on yours. Now hurry up and get up town and dress. I'll help you all I can, fact is I've got to. We are both rather late, and, while I'm not your slave, I do find you very useful when it comes to the selection of a shirt and waistcoat and collar."

And with that they proceeded up town together to Dawson's rooms, which somehow or other now seemed more cheerful and less lonesome than they had ever been before."

I am of the opinion that if Dawson could have foreseen the difficulties of that dinner he would have been willing to dispense with the services of his Reflection until the following morning. As if to impress upon him more forcibly than he had yet done the idea of his complete independence of his original, the Reflection, aided and abetted I

regret to say by that of his fair hostess, behaved at first with an irresponsibility that might almost be termed outrageous.

The diversion began in the drawing-room before dinner was announced. Dawson upon his arrival had bade *Au revoir* in the hall mirror to his other-self, and turning, had entered where sat Miss Robertson and her mother, and a certain Mr. Horace Webster who made the fourth of the little party. The greeting between them having passed, Dawson was about to sit down upon a comfortable chair facing the windows of the drawing-room between which stood a large cheval glass of antique design; the others sat with their backs to this mirror, which stood in the shadow of the far end of the room. What went on in it was observable only to Dawson. His agitation may well be imagined when he observed an entirely different sort of greeting going on on the other side of the glass, when the reflected Dawson arrived. I leave it to the imagination, or, if they prefer, to the remembrance of persons who have been engaged to be married as to how the reflected Miss Robertson greeted the equally unsubstantial Mr. Dawson. I shall not go into the details of the ceremony because my knowledge of what would be likely to happen under the circumstances is based entirely upon my own experiences as a participant in similar complications, and the young ladies involved might not be pleased to find me turning those varied and fascinating experiences into what is vulgarly

known as copy. Suffice it to say it happened, and Dawson seeing it gasped and realising the situation anew plumped with more force than elegance into his chair. The ladies looked anxiously at him and I am not sure but that Mr. Horace Webster gained the impression that Dawson had stopped at several of his clubs on his way from his house to the Robertson's. Dawson himself made a strenuous effort to regain his wonted composure, and was so far successful that he was able to say that it had been a delightful day, although as a matter of fact it had been about the rawest, dampest day there had been during the season.

"Think so?" drawled Webster superciliously. "Some people have queer tastes in weather."

"I do," said Dawson abruptly, in fact so savagely that Miss Robertson began to grow seriously apprehensive as to the success of the evening; and Webster was confirmed in his belief that Dawson had not been as careful in the matter of his libations as he ought to have been.

Perceiving his error and desiring to correct the unpleasant impression he could not help but feel that he was making, Dawson flew to the opposite extreme, and became freshly jocular. He addressed Mrs. Robertson after the manner of one who was speaking to a debutante, which did not by any means displease that lady, who having turned fifty sometimes rather enjoyed a reminder of her past. He became profusely jocose with Webster in spite of the

growing hatred of that person, which had been for a long time implanted in his breast, and as for his attentions to Miss Robertson herself, these became so flippant that it recalled the mirrored Reflections to their senses. They by all the telegraphic signs in their knowledge, motions with the hands, the lips, and shakings of the head, warned him against further pursuit of this course of action. So earnest did they become that Dawson in the middle of a sentence stopped suddenly short and craning his neck toward the mirror with a forward inclination of his body ejaculated "What?" as though some one had said something that he had not quite caught.

"Good Lord!" he muttered under his breath as he realised what he had done, but at this moment Mrs. Robertson and her daughter, and Webster as well, turned to see what it was at that end of the room that had arrested Dawson's attention. If Dawson had been dull in apprehending the danger signals of the teasing spirits, they were by no means blind to the necessities of the situation and as the two ladies and Webster turned about the four Reflections were arranged in as orderly a fashion and as appropriately as they would have been had they been merely the slaves Dawson had originally thought them.

"What is what?" asked Webster.

"Oh," said Dawson pulling himself together with an effort, "It's that Louis XIV mirror back there between the windows. I had never observed it be-

fore and er—you know I—and er you know I—I'm interested in old furniture. My er—my family used to have a great deal of it in the last century you know." Here he laughed nervously at his own joke. "And I still have one or two pieces which have come down to me from my ancestors," he added.

"We have had that mirror, Mr. Dawson," said Mrs. Robertson, "for years and years."

"Why yes," said Miss Robertson "you certainly have seen it before. Don't you remember we were talking about it the last time you were here?"

"Oh is that the one?" said Dawson. "I thought it was a Louis Quinze we were discussing. The effect of the light at that end of the room conveyed to my mind the idea that it was something new."

"Like most other ancient furniture," said Webster. And amid the mild laughter of the company at this sally Dawson was delighted to hear the butler at the broad portière door at the rear, announce to Mrs. Robertson that dinner was served. Fortunately the behaviour of the Reflections before dinner was no criterion of that which was to follow. If it had been so, I doubt if Dawson would have lived sanely through the meal. The Reflected figures seemed thoroughly to appreciate the situation, and observing that there was a point beyond which Dawson's nervous system might not be stretched, carefully abstained from all further efforts to disturb his

equanimity. The result was that Dawson speedily became himself again and managed before long to correct the wrong impression of the early part of the evening; beginning with which time Webster very naturally began to feel himself somewhat at a disadvantage, and shortly after the coffee, departed leaving Dawson master of the field. Sorry to relate Mrs. Robertson did not do likewise, so that our poor principal was compelled to sit through the evening, or rather that portion of it between demi-tasse and his departure, his natural inclinations bound as if in chains and tantalised by having to witness a *tête-à-tête* in the mirror which was in its every detail quite in line with that experience which I have already mentioned, but for the sake of others have hesitated to describe in full particular. With all this going on before him it is hardly to be wondered at that Miss Robertson found Dawson a rather dull companion, and after his departure, shortly after ten o'clock, she should have gone to her room and tearfully complained to the sad-faced little creature who gazed back at her from the depths of her dressing-table glass, that life was an empty sort of a dream after all.

But what the deuce her reflection had to cry about I must confess I cannot even guess, for as far as I know there was nothing disappointing in her Dawson as a lover.

Dawson breathed a sigh of relief as he left the house, and started home. "It's a wonder," said he,

"that I'm alive. I think I'll go to the club and get a night-cap."

Acting upon this impulse he hailed a passing hansom, jumped into it and rode down the Boulevard in the direction of his club. As a still further assuagement to his troubled soul, he took out a cigar and in the act of lighting it perceived his Reflected self gazing at him out of the little mirror at the side.

"You're a nice fellow, you are," he said. "You raised the very devil with me to-night."

"It wasn't my fault," said the other. "It was Miss Robertson's other self that egged me on. Women as a rule think it great sport to plague chaps in your position. What could I do?"

"You might have protested," said Dawson.

"Humph," said the Reflection. "It is very evident you've never been engaged. If you had been you'd have known that the man never protests about anything the glorious She wants to do. She is his ideal and everything she does is just right. All the protests come after marriage."

"You are a cynical spirit, aren't you?" said Dawson.

"Oh yes," said the Reflection. "I have all your evil qualities in full measure, but in subjection. Furthermore I think the experience was a good thing for you. It gives you a hint as to what you ought to hurry up and do yourself, and it will teach you self-control. If you'd had any backbone yourself

you needn't have got so frightfully rattled as you did to-night. Webster made a better showing than you did."

"By the way," said Dawson. "Where does Webster's Reflection come in in your little romance?"

"It doesn't," said the other. "He's out of it, which is a purely literary way of saying he's not in it."

"How did you get rid of him?" asked Dawson.

"Didn't have to," said the Reflection. "Which also ought to show you, my dear Dawson, how much more attractive I am than you are. It was a case of first sight with my Miss Robertson. Do you remember where we first met?"

"I remember where *we* first met," said Dawson. "It was at the Henley's tea. I thought Miss Robertson on that occasion a very attractive young person, but a little stiff and reserved in her manner."

"That's what I thought when I met mine," said the Reflection. "But I knew at once that the stiffer and more reserved she appeared to be to me, the more likely it was that the emotion she experienced upon meeting me, was of the kind that required a special effort to control. I recognised in Miss Robertson's reserve when she met me the fact that I had made an impression, and I've taken mighty good care ever since to foster it, whereas you have been so awfully timid about your manifest duty, that you've left all sorts of loopholes for chaps like Horace

Webster to trespass upon what might have been your preserves."

"Nevertheless," put in Dawson, "Webster was there on your side."

"Of course he was," said the Reflection. "We owe something to conventionality and it was only courteous that inasmuch as Webster was on your side of the glass, his Reflection should appear on our side. We couldn't without seeming to be very arbitrary, and unconventional, intimate to Webster's Reflection that while his original was dining with you, he himself should be compelled to wander up and down outside on the cold street waiting for your Webster to come out. Furthermore," the Reflection added, his voice sinking to a confidential whisper, "our engagement is not yet known even to the old lady. In the management of old ladies under such peculiar circumstances there is nothing like having a fourth party to engage her occasionally in conversation. It works with the most persistent dragon of a chaperon and there have been many love affairs brought to their logical conclusion under the very eyes of a disapproving mamma through the instrumentality of that same blessed fourth person who can manage to take her eye off the immediate business in hand."

"Thanks for the hint," said Dawson "I'll remember that, but where are you bound?"

"Club," replied the Reflection laconically.

"That's bad business for an engaged man," said

Dawson. "Don't see what you want to go to the Club for after such an evening as you've had."

"Well there are two reasons," said the Reflection, "for wanting to go. In the first place it's the best time for an engaged man to go to the Club. A man who goes to the Club before he calls upon his fiancée, has either to indulge in total abstinence or possibly subject himself to a lecture. The wise man does not encourage the lecture habit in his best girl. It establishes a precedent which after marriage he may regret. But that's not at all my real reason for going. Personally I have no more use for the Club at this hour of the night than I would have for a club sandwich after a Lord Mayor's banquet. My real reason for going is that I think you may need looking after. I can read night-cap in your eye, and as I look farther down into your optics, it seems to me I can see indications that without much pressure you could be induced to take all you need and about three more."

"Again I thank you," said Dawson. "You're a good chap to look after me so carefully. I wish to thunder you'd be as kind to me when I really need you. You can't blame me for wanting to restore my shattered nerves. Try as you may you cannot shirk the responsibility for my condition."

"That is precisely why I am here," said the other. "However, if you don't want me I'll go back to the Robertson's. Miss Robertson has retired doubtless by this time and possibly I can have an opportunity

to call upon her Reflection for an hour without any interruption from the cold and reserved original."

"You don't mean to say," cried Dawson "that you Reflections can meet independently of us? You're not so infernally independent as all that, are you?"

"Of course," was the answer. "Many is the time in the country when I have taken moonlight rows on the lake with Reflections of my acquaintance whilst you were soundly sleeping up in your little six-by-nine bed room on the top floor, dreaming what a good time you were having in the mountains. You were doing the dreaming and I was having the good time."

"Jove!" cried Dawson. "You do lead an ideal life, don't you? Are you responsible for your acts to any kind of a being in the heavens above or the earth beneath or the waters under the earth?"

"I am," said the Reflection.

"To what?" cried Dawson. "God, man or Devil?"

"To a little of all three," said the Reflection. "Not to myself, but to my ideal of you."

Dawson was properly impressed and indeed somewhat overcome by this show of loyalty on his Reflection's part and with a genial smile to his *vis-à-vis*, he said.

"You're better than a cock-tail, old chap; and I don't know but I'll show my gratitude by releasing

you from your responsibility. I'll go without the night-cap and seek my downy couch."

"Good," said the Reflection. "Under my guidance you are gradually becoming a wise man."

And with this Dawson bade the cabman retrace his steps and drive him home.

Next day, mercifully for Dawson, who was physically and mentally exhausted, was Sunday. Therefore there was no necessity for his rising even with a moderately lazy lark, and the morning sun streaming in through his chamber window found him sleeping the sleep of the just. Nine, ten and eleven o'clock struck on the ormolu clock on the mantel-shelf. Fifteen minutes later with a nervous start he awoke, passed his hand rapidly over his eyes and yawned.

"Scott," he ejaculated with that peculiar intonation which comes at the close of a truly successful yawn. "I must have been frightfully tired. Slept like a log all night." He yawned again as he rose and walked somewhat unsteadily to the glass.

"I must be looking pretty woozy," he said. But if he expected to find confirmation of this description of his features he was doomed to disappointment, for the reflected room on the other side of the glass was empty. For an instant Dawson was very much upset at this discovery for in his waking moments his mind held no recollection of the incidents of the day before, or if it did have a glimmering sense of something of that kind, it was so slight and so

confused withal that he might have been excused for setting it all down as a dream.

There was no mistaking the reality of the situation which now confronted him, however. Nowhere in all that reflected space beyond, into which he peered with an almost despairful interest, was there anything even remotely resembling human life. That his Reflection had spent the night at home was quite evident for the condition of the bed made manifest the fact that it had been occupied. That he must have risen not long before and dressed was likewise shown by the fact that the somewhat gorgeous pyjamas Dawson had on instead of being reflected as a part of the environment of a human being were represented by a little heap of soft silky stuff tossed apparently in some haste in the direction of the clothes-basket, and his clothes were missing from the reflected room.

For a moment Dawson gazed blankly into the silver depths, then he laughed.

"I wonder what devilment he's up to to-day. He probably couldn't sleep and was too impatient to wait for me to get up, but where the Dickens can he be? Taking a bath I wonder?" And he peered in the direction of the door opening into the bath-room. This, however, was closed.

"I'll fix that," said Dawson turning his back on the glass and walking to his own bath-room door. He swung it open, but the reflected bath-room was empty as the real.

"Oh come," cried Dawson giving way to impatience. "This is carrying it a little too far. Come out of that," he added putting his face as close to the glass as he could as if to make himself better heard on the other side. "I wish to get dressed."

There was no response and then Dawson turning angrily away was about to give vent to his impatience in language of more force than refinement, when his eye fell upon a small card pinned on the back of his mirrored arm chair upon which were scrawled in large legible character the words:

"Unexpectedly called away. Very important. For explanation see note top of escritoire."

"Here's a howdy-do," said Dawson as he read the remarkable message. "Unexpectedly called away, eh? Gone off and left me in the lurch because of some private little matter of his own I suppose. Nice state of affairs for a chap like me to have a light and airy shadow setting up in business for himself."

He peered in again through the glass.

"What's that last line, 'Very important—for explanation see note top of escritoire.' I wonder which escritoire he means, his or mine,—independent Jackass!" Dawson was really getting angry. "It's very evident" he added, "that the explanation can't be found by me in the top of his escritoire since I can't get at it, so he must mean mine."

He opened the top of his own desk and found nothing there save a blank sheet of paper.

"Gay explanation that," cried Dawson impatiently, "but I think he's right. When he came to frame his note he found his mind in the same condition of blankness as this sheet of paper. My mentor! I like that. He's done more to get me into trouble in the last forty-eight hours than any orgie at the club could have done." He slammed the cover of the *escritoire* to and with an angry gesture crumpled the offending sheet of paper in his hand and tossed it across the room. Then in the hope that his mirrored self might have returned, he strode back to the glass and with his eyes searched eagerly every nook and corner in the room. The other was not there, however, but just as Dawson was about to turn away in despair his eyes fell upon the reflection of the crumpled paper. He could scarcely believe his senses for in that other room the blank sheet was no longer blank. Dawson sprang back and picked it up, smoothed its ruffled surface and gazed at it breathlessly. It was still blank, however, but with this discovery an idea flashed across his mind, acting upon which he held the sheet before the glass and lo and behold there was before him the following letter, evidently addressed by the shadowy Miss Robertson, to her shadowy fiancée, the lucky chap who had so basely deserted him.

"MY DEAR WILLIAM: I must see you at once. Very serious complications are in store for us unless you can induce your Mr. Dawson to act and act

quickly. He was not at all himself last night and Miss Robertson confessed to me that she found him tiresome. What will become of us if she marries Horace Webster? Just think of it for one moment and you will realise the extreme embarrassment of my position with me married to you; and my original married to Horace Webster! Why William it is awful. Come around right away and don't delay an instant. This matter must be taken in hand now or we are lost.

Yours affectionately,

"MADGE.

"P. S. Never mind what that pokey old Mr. Dawson thinks. Just come and let him get along without you."

Dawson read this communication over a half dozen times before the full import dawned upon his mind, and then he was duly impressed with the necessity of action.

"It proves one thing anyhow," he said as he stood ruefully regarding the paper. "Shadow women aren't a bit more considerate than their solidier sisters. She might at least have let him wait until I could dress. I'll have to go it alone I suppose and maybe if I dawdle long enough he may be back before I need him."

He proceeded slowly as was natural, considering the difficulties, with his dressing, mumbling to himself meanwhile somewhat crisp observations upon the incidents of the preceding thirty-six hours. The train of thought naturally lit upon some consider-

ation of Miss Robertson and his own attitude toward her.

"They think I'm slow," he said, "just because I haven't rushed things as they have. I have known her hardly a year yet, and these two airy beings think I should have settled the matter long ago and because I haven't I'm slow; well I'd rather be slow than repent when I'm slower still. Calls me pokey, does she? If that's what her Reflection, her illusion thinks, what kind of a sluggish thing must the original think me? Still I will make an effort for their sake." Here he chuckled softly.

"It would be a complication indeed if Webster should marry the one and my Reflection should marry the other. The only way out of that would be for Webster and me to swap Reflections, and I'll be hanged if I'll have that. If I had to have his ugly mug confronting me every time I looked in the mirror I'd go crazy in a fortnight."

A muffled sound from the other side of the glass interrupted Dawson's soliloquy at this point and walking to the mirror and looking in, he was delighted and at the same time depressed by what he saw there. The other had returned, but was sitting in a chair in an attitude of deep dejection, the equal of which I have never seen anywhere unless perhaps in the famous painting by David, of Napoleon after the battle of Waterloo.

"Well," said Dawson. "What's up?"

His Reflection rose silently from the chair and

walking up to his side of the glass so closely that his nose almost flattened against it, observed:

"The whole jig, I'm afraid Dawson. Something has got to be done and—you'll excuse the language, but I can't help it,—damned quick. Your pusillanimity is ruining my prospects."

"In what respect?" demanded Dawson. "To what prospects do you refer?"

"Matrimonial of course," said the other. "That's all an engaged man thinks of."

"Humph!" ejaculated Dawson. "I like that. Better call it your previousness. If you hadn't been in such an infernal hurry to get engaged, what you call my pusillanimity couldn't have interfered with you at all. It's your rank excess of what you are pleased to call your independence that has boxed you up if you happen to be in a box. It won't hurt you at all, considering how fresh you are, to stay in the box for a time."

"This is no time for airy persiflage," said the other. "This is serious business that confronts us and don't you forget it. Do you know what's going to happen in just two hours?" he said taking his watch out of his pocket.

"No, what?" said Dawson. "Going to be an earthquake?"

"I wish to Heaven there was," said the other. "It's worse. Horace Webster is going to take Miss Robertson for a drive, behind those two-forty trotters of his, up to Washington Bridge and back."

"The deuce you say," said Dawson.

"No, I said Horace Webster," said the other.

"The same thing, however."

"Well," said Dawson philosophically, "Perhaps that is bad news for me, but I don't see why you should mind it. Didn't you tell me that Horace Webster's Reflection wasn't in it with you?"

"That's all very well," said the other, "but in this case he is. He's going along too."

"I'll let you off for the afternoon," said Dawson. "Why don't you go and spend the afternoon with your fiancée, instead of letting another man run off with her?"

"She won't permit it," said the other. "She has a woman's idea of loyalty and overweening sense of her responsibility, and she deems it her duty to go along, especially when a man like Webster is involved, and of course Webster's Reflection will go along too. It's all right for Miss Robertson who's not engaged to you to be out with Webster, but it's all wrong for her Reflection who is engaged to me to be out with his Reflection and it makes me kind of hot in the collar to think of it."

"I don't see how it's going to happen," cried Dawson. "Has Webster got a plate-glass mirror in his wagon?"

"No," said the Reflection, but the next thing to it. It's one of these swell traps with a patent-leather dash-board, and you know what that means.

They'll sit hunched up together there all the afternoon, and I don't like it."

"Well, what are we going to do about it," said Dawson.

"Oh I'm tired of giving advice," said the other. "What's the use? Mere waste of breath. You never do what I ask you to and I'm tired of the whole business. I don't give a continental what you do, but I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going there to-night and I'm going to tell that young lady she's either got to give up Miss Robertson or me. That may bring her to her senses. If she decides in Miss Robertson's favour, I shall leave her, once and for all and simply come back and go through my duties here with no further interest in her, or you or anybody else. I shall cease to be her lover and your mentor and from that moment on when you look in the glass you'll see me there looking back at you, but as to whether your hair is brushed or your tie straight, or your chin smooth, or your brain fuddled, you'll get no hint from me," said his Reflection grinning horribly.

"My!" cried Dawson. "You have got it bad haven't you, and suppose she does not decide in favour of Miss Robertson and says that she will be yours and will comport herself according to your ideas as she should. What then?"

"That's simple enough," said the Reflection. "She will prove it by going upstairs to her room, putting on her hat and walking with me to the house

of the nearest clergyman who'll marry us. That's what."

"Jerusalem!" cried Dawson. "What a highwayman you are. You're going to marry her at the point of the pistol are you, without even the formality of a trousseau."

"Trousseau be hanged," said the other.

"You make a mistake," said Dawson. "Why, my dear boy, to say nothing of the economy of having the bride's mother set her up in clothes for a season, what the deuce does a woman marry for if not for the trousseau? It strikes me that in most marriages that is the most important part of the ceremony."

"It may be with you," said the Reflection, "and it may be with us for all I know. I've never had any experience in getting married, nor have I become such an expert in flippancy as to be able to compete with you in your present frame of mind."

"But after the marriage?" said Dawson. "What are you going to do? Where are you going to live?"

"Where neither you nor Miss Robertson will ever find us. I've received scant courtesy from you, sir, and there is no reason why I should continue to sacrifice my prospects to you any longer. To put it plainly I think we shall go abroad and settle down somewhere in England where people have lived long enough to accept what they are pleased to call ghosts at their true valuation."

"And I?" said Dawson aghast at this proposition.

"Will be out a Reflection unless you develop a great sight more ingenuity than you have ever yet evinced and manage to secure a substitute. And I'll tell you frankly, Dawson, I don't think you can."

"Help me dress," said Dawson shortly. He realised that the time for action had arrived.

"I won't do anything of the sort," retorted the Reflection. "You've ruined me by your dilatory tactics and I don't propose ever again to serve any possible interest that may be yours."

"Stop your nonsense," said Dawson. "It isn't too late. What time does Webster call on Miss Robertson?"

"Four o'clock."

"Well it's only two now. Hustle, old chap. There's a good Reflection. I can get into my frock-coat and be at the Robertson house by three if you'll only brace up."

"You will?" cried the Reflection, the gloom disappearing from his face. "And you will speak to her?"

"Oh no—of course not," Dawson returned drily. "I'm just going around there to smash a few pieces of bric-a-brac and to poison her mother."

The Reflection looked at him in silence for a moment, then it smiled and obeyed his behest. Twenty minutes later Dawson left the house.

* * * * *

When Webster called that afternoon with his trotters and his trap he was surprised to be informed that Miss Robertson begged to be excused. She really had a most frightful headache—an affliction which I think the disappointed Jehu would have regretted all the more, had he been able to see the improvised pillow upon which, in the comfortable seclusion of the drawing-room, the suffering head was resting, for this was none other than the broad shoulder of Dawson himself.

Incidentally Dawson's Reflection was enjoying a similar blissful experience in all five of the mirrors which served to furnish the Robertson parlour.

"Now what an absurd idea," cried a literal-minded dowager.

"Do you mean that Shadows can't be independent of their creators?" asked some one.

"Of course not."

"I'll prove the reverse. Here we are all sitting absolutely still, yet look at our shadows jump about and come and go on the wall back there."

"But that's the reflection of the fire."

"Nevertheless, they move, when we are still."

"And there are shadows," said a masculine voice well back in the room, speaking low yet so that it caught the attention more than a louder tone would have done. "They are the real being, yet are but shadows, as dreams sometimes seem to be more true, more intense, than our waking moments. Let me unfold to you the story

of a friend of mine, and then tell me which was which—the man or the shadow, the dream or the reality. I'll call it A SURRENDER! for that's what it was."

"Ugh!" said a girl. "I know it's going to be horrible, just from the tone of your voice."

"Not at all—not at all," denied the teller, hastily, laughing lightly. "It's nothing but—but a conundrum, after all, only it's for you to find the answer."

A SURRENDER

THE story begins one day when a friend whom I'll call Morgan Russell and I were lolling on the beach at Rock Ledge watching the bathers. We had played three sets of tennis, followed by a dip in the ocean, and were waiting for the luncheon hour. Though Russell was my junior by four years, we were old friends, and had prearranged our vacation to renew our intimacy, which the force of circumstances had interrupted since we were students together at Harvard. Russell had been a Freshman when I was a Senior, but as we happened to room in the same entry, this propinquity had resulted in warm mutual liking. I had been out of college for eight years, had studied law, and was then the managing clerk of a large law firm, and was receiving what I then thought a tremendous salary. Russell was still at Cambridge. He had elected at graduation to pursue post-graduate courses in chemistry and physics, and had recently accepted a tutorship. He had not discovered until the beginning of the Junior year his strong predilection for scientific investigation, but he had given himself up to it with an ardour which dwarfed everything else on the horizon of his fancy. It was of his future we were talking, for he wished to take his old chum into his confidence and to make plain his ambition. "I

recognise of course," he told me, "that I've an uphill fight ahead of me, but my heart is in it. My heart wouldn't be in it if I felt that the best years of my life were to be eaten up by mere teaching. That's the trouble at Harvard,—at all the colleges in fact. A man who's hired to teach is expected to teach until his daily supply of grey matter has run out, and his original work has to wait until after he's dead. There's where I'm more fortunate than some. The fifteen hundred dollars,—a veritable godsend—which I receive annually under the will of my aunt, will keep the wolf at a respectful distance and enable me to play the student to my heart's content. I'm determined to be thorough, George. There is no excuse for superficiality in science. But in the end I intend to find out something new. See if I don't, old man."

"I haven't a doubt you will, Morgan," I replied. "I don't mind letting on that I ran across Professor Drayson last winter and he told me you were the most promising enthusiast he had seen for a long time; that you were patient and level headed as well as eager. Drayson doesn't scatter compliments lightly. But fifteen hundred dollars isn't a very impressive income."

"It was very good of the old fellow to speak so well of me."

"Suppose you marry"?

"Marry?" Russell looked up from the sea shells with which he had been playing, and smiled brightly.

He had a thin, slightly delicate face with an expression which was both animated and amiable, and keen, strong grey eyes. "I've thought of that. I'm not what is called contemplating matrimony at the moment; but I've considered the possibility, and it doesn't appall me."

"On fifteen hundred a year"?

"And why not, George" he responded a little fiercely. "Think of the host of teachers, clerks, small tradesmen and innumerable other reputable human beings who marry and bring up families on that or less. Which do you think I would prefer, to amass a fortune in business and have my town and country house and steam yacht, or to exist on a pittance and discover before I die something to benefit the race of man"?

"Knowing you as I do, there's only one answer to that conundrum," said I. "And you're right, too, theoretically, Morgan. My ancestors in Westford would have thought fifteen hundred downright comfort, and in admitting to you that five thousand in New York is genteel poverty, I merely reveal what greater comforts the ambitious American demands. I agree with you that from the point of view of real necessity one-half the increase is sheer materialism. But who's the girl"?

"There is no girl. Probably there never will be. But I'm no crank. I like a good dinner and a seat at the play, and an artistic domestic hearth as

well as the next man. If I were to marry, of course I should retain the tutorship which I accepted temporarily as a means of training my own perceptions, though I should try to preserve as at present a considerable portion of my time free from the grind of teaching. Then much as I despise the method of rushing into print prematurely in order to achieve a newspaper scientific reputation, I should expect to eke out my income by occasional magazine articles and presently a book. With twenty-five hundred or three thousand a year we should manage famously."

"It would all depend upon the woman" said I with the definiteness of an oracle.

"If the savants in England, France and Germany,—the men who have been content to starve in order to attain immortality—could find wives to keep them company, surely their counterparts are to be found here where woman is not the slave but the companion of man and is encouraged to think not merely about him but think with him." Russell stopped abruptly, then raised himself on one elbow. Attracted by his sudden interest I lolled lazily in the same direction, and after a moment's scrutiny ejaculated: "It looks just like her."

As it was nearing the luncheon hour, most of the bathers had retired. Two women, one of them a girl of twenty-five, in the full bloom of youth and vigour, with an open countenance and a self reliant, slightly effusive smile, were on the way

to their bath. They were stepping transversely across the beach from their bath house at one end in order to reach the place where the waves were highest, and their course was taking them within a few yards of the young men. For some reason the younger woman had not put on the oil skin cap designed to save her abundant hair from inundation, but carried it dangling from her fingers, and, just as Russell noticed her, she dropped it on the beach. After stooping to pick it up, she waited a moment for her friend to join her revealing her full face.

"Yes, it's certainly she," I announced. "I spoke to her on the pier in New York last autumn, when she was returning from Europe, and it's either she or her double."

"You know her"?

"Yes, the widow Spaulding."

"Widow? You mean the girl"?

There was just a trace of disappointment in the tone of Russell's surprise.

"Yes I mean the girl. But you needn't dismiss her altogether from your fastidiously romantic soul merely because she has belonged to another. There are extenuating circumstances. She married the Rev. Horace Spaulding, poor fellow, on his death bed, when he was in the last stages of consumption, and two days later she was his widow."

"You seem to know a good deal about her."

"I ought to, for she was born and bred in Westford. Edna Knight was her name,—the daughter

of Justin Knight, the local attorney, half lawyer and half dreamer. His parents were followers of Emerson, and there has been plain living and high thinking in that family for three generations. Look at her," I added, as she breasted a giant wave and jubilantly threw herself into its embrace, "she takes to the water like a duck. I never saw a girl so metamorphosed in three years."

"What was she like before?" asked Russell.

"Changed physically, I mean, and—and socially, I suppose it should be called. Three years ago at the time of her marriage to Spaulding she was a slip of a girl, shy, delicate and introspective. She and her lover were brought up in adjacent houses, and the world for her signified the garden hedge over which they whispered in the gloaming, and later his prowess at the divinity school and his hope of a parish. When galloping consumption cut him off she walked about shrouded in her grief as one dead to the world of men and women. I passed her occasionally when I returned home to visit my family, and she looked as though she were going into a decline. That was a year after her marriage. Solicitous sympathy was unavailing, and the person responsible for her regaining her grip on life was, curiously enough, a summer boarder whom old Mrs. Spaulding had taken into her family in order to make both ends meet. Westford has been saved from rusting out by the advent in the nick of time of the fashionable summer boarder, and Mrs. Sidney

Dale, whose husband is a New York banker, and who spent two summers there as a cure for nervous prostration, fascinated Edna without meaning to and made a new woman of her in the process. There is the story for you. A year ago Mrs. Dale took her to Europe as a sort of finishing touch I suppose. I understand Westford thinks her affliction has developed her wonderfully, and finds her immensely improved; which must mean that she has triumphed over her grief but has not forgotten, for Westford would never pardon a purely material evolution."

"I noticed her at the hotel this morning before you arrived, and admired the earnestness and ardour of her expression."

"And her good looks presumably. I saw you start when she approached just now. She may be just the woman for you."

"Introduce me then. And her companion"?

"Will fall to my lot, of course, but I have no clue as to her identity."

Mrs. Spaulding enlightened me on the hotel piazza, after luncheon, when, as a sequence to this persiflage I brought up my friend. The stranger proved to be Mrs. Agnes Gay Spinney, a literary person, a lecturer on history and literature. It transpired later that she and Edna had become acquainted and intimate at Westford the previous spring during a few weeks which Mrs. Spinney had spent there in the preparation of three new lectures for the coming season. She was a rather serious

looking woman of about forty with a straight figure, good features and a pleasant, but infrequent smile, suggesting that its owner was not susceptible to flippancy. However, she naively admitted that she had come away for pure recreation and to forget the responsibilities of life.

Morgan and the widow were conversing with so much animation that I, to whom this remark was addressed, took upon myself to give youth a free field; consequently I resigned myself to Mrs. Spinney's dignified point of view, and, avoiding badinage or irony, evinced such an amiable interest in drawing her out that by the end of fifteen minutes she asked leave to show me the catalogue of her lectures, a proof of which she had just received from the printer. When she had gone to fetch it, I promptly inquired:

"Why don't you two young people improve this fine afternoon by a round of golf"?

A gleam of animation over Morgan's face betrayed that he regarded the suggestion as eminently happy. But it was Edna who spoke first.

"If Mr. Russell will put up with my poor game, I should enjoy playing immensely. But" she added smiling confidently and regarding him with her large steady brown eyes "I don't intend to remain a duffer at it long. I see" she continued after a moment "from your expression, Mr. Randall, that you doubt this. Confess; it was the corners of your mouth."

"I must grow a moustache to conceal my thoughts, it seems. I was only thinking, Mrs. Spaulding, that golf is a difficult game at which to excel."

"Yes, but they say that care and determination and—and keeping the eye on the ball will work wonders even for a woman. I shall be only a moment in getting ready, Mr. Russell."

"But what is to become of you, George?" asked Morgan as she disappeared.

"I noticed that a sensitive conscience kept you tongue-tied. This is probably one of the most self-sacrificing acts which will be performed the present summer. But you will remember that Mephistopheles on a certain occasion was equally good-natured."

"Don't be absurd. Is she very trying"?

"Martha had some humour and no understanding, Mrs. Spinney has some understanding and no humour. Here she comes with her catalogue of lectures. There are over fifty of them, and from their scope she must be almost omniscient. How are you getting on with the widow"?

"Mrs. Spaulding seems to me an interesting woman. She has opinions of her own, which she expresses clearly and firmly. I like her," responded Morgan with a definiteness of manner which suggested that he was not to be debarred by fear of banter from admitting that he was attracted.

As they strode over the links that afternoon he was impressed continuously by her fine physical

bearing. There was a freedom and an ease in her movements, essentially womanly and graceful, yet independent and self-reliant, which stirred his pulses. He had been a close and absorbed student, and his observation of the other sex had been largely indifferent and formal. He knew of course that the modern woman had sloughed off helplessness and docile dependence on man, but like an ostrich with its head in the sand he had chosen to form a mental conception of what she was like, and he had pictured her either as a hoyden or an unsympathetic blue-stocking. This trig, well-developed beauty, with her sensible, alert face and capable manner was an agreeable revelation. If she was a type, he had neglected his opportunities. But the present was his at all events. Here was companionship worthy of the name, and a stimulating vindication of the success of woman's revolt from her own weakness and subserviency. When at the conclusion of their game they sat down on a bank overlooking the last hole and connected conversation took the place of desultory dialogue between shots, he was struck by her common sense, her enthusiasm and her friendliness. He gathered that she was eager to support herself by some form of intellectual occupation, preferably teaching or writing, and that she had come to Rock Ledge with Mrs. Spinney in order to talk over quietly whether she would better take courses of study at Radcliffe or Wellesley, or learn the Kindergarten methods and

at the same time apply herself diligently to reading and try putting her thoughts on paper. Of one thing she was certain, that she did not wish to rust out in Westford. While her father lived, of course her nominal home would be there, but she felt that she could not be happy with nothing but household employment in a small town out of touch with the movement and breadth of modern life.

It is easy and natural for two young people vegetating at a summer resort to become exceedingly intimate in three or four days, especially when facility for intercourse is promoted and freedom from interruption guaranteed by a self-sacrificing accessory. My complicity at the outset had been pure off-hand pleasantry, but by the end of thirty-six hours it was obvious to me that Morgan's interest was that of a man deeply infatuated. Seeing that the two young people were of marriageable age and free, so far as I knew, from disqualifying blemishes which would justify me in putting either on guard against the other, I concluded that it behooved me as a loyal friend to keep Mrs. Spinney occupied and out of the way. Consequently Morgan and Mrs. Spaulding were constantly together during the ensuing ten days, and, so skilfully did I do this that the innocent pair regarded the flirtation which I was carrying on as a superb joke,—a case of a banterer caught in the toils, and Mrs. Spinney's manners suggested that she was agreeably flattered.

Morgan's statement that he had never contemplated marriage was true, and yet in the background of his dream of the future lurked a female vision whose sympathy and companionship was to be the spur of his ambition and the mainstay of his courage. Had he found her? He did not need to ask himself the question more than once. He knew that he had, and, knowing that he was deeply in love, he turned to face the two questions by which he was confronted. First, would she have him? Second, in case she would, was he in a position to ask her to marry him, or, more concretely, could he support her? The first could be solved only by direct inquiry of herself. The answer to the second depended on whether the views which he had expressed to me as to the possibilities of matrimonial content in circumstances like his were correct. Or was I right, and did it all depend upon the woman? But what if it did? Was not this just the woman to sympathise entirely with his ambition and to keep him up to the mark in case the shoe pinched? There was no doubt of her enthusiasm and interest when in the course of one of their walks he had confided to her that he had dedicated his life to close scientific investigation. Well, he would lay the situation squarely before her and she could give him his answer. If she was the kind of woman he believed her to be and she loved him and had faith in him, would the prospect of

limited means appall her? He felt sure that it would not.

Before the end of the fortnight he made a clean breast of his love and of his scruples. He chose an occasion when they had strolled far along the shore and were resting among picturesque rocks overlooking the ocean. She listened shyly, as became a woman, but once or twice while he was speaking she looked up at him with unmistakable ardour and joy in her brown eyes which let him know that his feelings were reciprocated before she confessed it by speech. He was so determined to make clear to her what was in store for her if she accepted him that without waiting for an answer to his burning avowal he proceeded to point out and to reiterate that the scantiest kind of living so far as creature comforts were concerned was all which he could promise either for the present or for the future.

When, having satisfied his conscience, he ceased speaking, Edna turned toward him and with a sigh of sentiment swept back the low bands of profuse dark hair from her temples as though by the gesture she were casting all anxieties and hindrances to the winds. "How strange it is"! she murmured. "The last thing which I supposed could happen to me in coming here was that I should marry. But I am in love,—in love with you; and to turn one's back on that blessing would be to squander the happiness of existence." She was silent a moment.

Then she continued gravely, "As you know, I was engaged—married once before. How long ago it seems! I thought once, I believed once, that I could never love again. Dear Horace, how wrapped up we were in each other! But I was a child then, and—and it seems as though all I know of the real world has been learned since. I must not distrust,—I will not refuse the opportunity to make you happy and to become happier myself by resisting the impulse of my heart. I love you—Morgan."

"Thank God! But are you sure, Edna, that you have counted the cost of marrying me"?

"Oh yes. We shall manage very well I think," she answered, speaking slowly and contracting a little her broad brow in the attempt to argue dispassionately. "It isn't as if you had nothing. You have fifteen hundred dollars and your salary, nearly two thousand more. Five years ago that would have seemed to me wealth, and now, of course, I understand that it isn't; and five years ago I suppose I would have married a man if I loved him no matter how poor he was. But to-day I am wiser,—that's the word, isn't it? For I recognize that I might not be happy as a mere drudge, and to become one would conflict with what I feel that I owe myself in the way of—shall I call it civilising and self-respecting comfort? So you see if you hadn't a cent, I might feel it was more sensible and better for us both to wait or to give each other up. But it isn't a case of that at all. We've plenty to start

on,—plenty, and more than I'm accustomed to; and by the time we need more, if we do need more, you will be famous."

"But it's just that, Edna," he interjected quickly. "I may never be famous. I may be obscure, and we may be poor, relatively speaking, all our lives," and he sighed dismally.

"Oh yes you will, and Oh no we sha'n't," she exclaimed buoyantly. "Surely, you don't expect me to believe that you are not going to succeed and to make a name for yourself? We must take some chances,—if that is a chance. You have told me yourself that you intended to succeed."

"In the end, yes."

"Why then shouldn't I believe it, too? It would be monstrous,—disloyal and unromantic not to. I won't listen to a word more on that score, please. And the rest follows, doesn't it? We are marrying because we love each other and believe we can help each other, and I am sure one of the reasons why we love each other is that we both have enthusiasm and find life intensely absorbing and admire that in the other. There's the great difference between me now and what I was at eighteen. The mere zest of existence seems to me so much greater than it used. There are so many interesting things to do, so many interesting things which we would like to do. And now we shall be able to do them together, shan't we"? she concluded, her eyes lighted with confident happiness, her cheeks mantling partly from

love, partly, perhaps, from a sudden consciousness that she was almost playing the-wooer.

Morgan was equal to the occasion. "Until death do us part, Edna. This is the joy of which I have dreamed for years and wondered if it could ever be mine," he whispered, as he looked into her face with all the ardour of his soul and kissed her on the lips.

That evening he hooked his arm in mine on the piazza after dinner and said, "You builded better than you knew, George. We are engaged, and she's the one woman in the world for me. I've told her everything,—everything, and she isn't afraid."

"And you give me the credit of it. That's Christian and handsome. I'll say one thing for her which anyone can see from her face, that she has good looks and intelligence. As to the rest, you monopolised her so that our acquaintance is yet to begin."

"It shall begin at once," said Morgan, with a happy laugh. "But what about you, George?"

"I leave for New York to-night. Now that the young lovers have plighted their troth my presence is no longer necessary. A sudden telegram will arrive."

"But Mrs. Spinney? We had begun to—er—hope"—

"Hope"?

"Begun to think—wondered if"—

"I were going to marry a woman several years my senior who has the effrontery to believe that she

can lecture acceptably on the entire range of literary and social knowledge from the Troubadours and the Crusades to Rudyard Kipling and the Referendum? Such is the reward of disinterested self-sacrifice"!

"Forgive me, George. I knew at first that you were trying to do me a good turn, but—but you were so persistent that you deceived us. I'm really glad there's nothing in it."

"Thanks awfully." Then bending a sardonic glance on my friend, I murmured sententiously.

"Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,
And therefore is Winged Cupid painted blind."

* * * * *

"Edna, why don't you take a more active interest in these club gatherings"? asked Morgan Russell one afternoon after they had been married eight years. He had laid aside his work for the day, and having joined his wife on the piazza was glancing over a printed notice of a meeting which she had left on the table. "I'm inclined to think you would get considerable diversion from them, and the study work at home would be in your line."

Edna was silent a moment. She bent her head over her work—a child's blouse—that he might not notice that she was biting her lip, and she managed to impart a dispassionate and almost jaunty tone to the indictment : uttered.

"Every now and then, Morgan, you remind me of Edward Casaubon in *Middlemarch*. Not often, but every now and then lately."

"That selfish, fusty, undiscerning book-worm"?

"You're not selfish and you're not fusty; but you remind me of him when you make remarks like your first." She brushed a caterpillar from her light summer skirt, and noticing the draggled edge held it up. "There's one answer to your question about taking an active interest in clubs. There are twenty others, but this is one."

Her husband appeared puzzled. He looked well, but pale and thin, as though accustomed to close application.

"I mean I can't afford it," she added.

"I see. Then it was stupid of me,—Casaubonish I dare say, to have spoken. I was only trying to put a little more variety into your life because I realised that you ought to have it."

Edna gave a faint sigh by way of acquiescence. Marriage had changed her but little in appearance. She looked scarcely older, and her steady eyes, broad brow and ready smile gave the same effect of determination and spirit, though she seemed more sober.

"I'm a little dull myself and that makes me captious," she asserted. Then dropping her work and clasping her hands she looked up earnestly at him and said, "Don't you see the impossibility of my being active in my club, Morgan? I go to it, of course, occasionally, so as not to drop out of things

altogether, but in order to take a prominent part and get the real benefit of the meetings a woman needs time and money. Not so very much money, nor so very much time, but more of either than I have at my disposal. Of course, I should like, if we had more income—and what is much more essential—more time, to accept some of the invitations which I receive to express my ideas before the Club, but it is out of the question. I have a horror of superficiality just as you have.”

“A sad fate; a poor man’s wife,” said Morgan with a smile which, though tranquil, was wan.

“And you warned me. Don’t think for a moment I’m complaining or regretting. I was only answering your question. Do you realise, dear, we shall have been married eight years day after tomorrow?”

“So we have, Edna. And what a blessing our marriage has been to me.”

“We have been very happy.” Then, she said, after a pause, as though she had been making up her mind to put the question, “You are really content, Morgan?”

“Content”? he echoed, “with you, Edna?”

“Not with me as me, but with us both together; with our progress, and with what we stand for as human beings?”

“I think so. That is relatively speaking, and provided I understand correctly what you mean.”

She had not resumed her work, and her eager,

resolute expression indicated that she was preparing to push the conversation to a more crucial point.

"I suppose what I mean is, would you, if we were going to start over again, do just as you have,—devote yourself to science"?

"Oh." Morgan flushed. "I don't see the use of considering that conundrum. I have devoted myself to science and there is no help for it, even if I were dissatisfied."

"No present help."

"No help at any time, Edna. But why resurrect this ghost? We burned our bridges at the altar."

"We did. And don't misunderstand me, dear. I'm not flinching, I'm not even regretting, as I said to you before. Perhaps it may seem to you brutal,—which is worse than Casaubonish—to ask you such a question. Still we're husband and wife, and on an anniversary like this why isn't it sensible to look matters squarely in the face, and consider whether we've been wise or not. You ask the use. Are we not both seeking the truth"?

"Just as a tradesman takes an account of stock to ascertain whether he is bankrupt. I suppose you are thinking of the children and—and you admitted that you are a little tired yourself."

"I wasn't thinking of any one. I was simply considering the question as an abstract proposition,—by the light, of course, of our experience."

"It is hard for you, Edna; yes, it is hard. I often think of it."

"But I shouldn't mind its being hard if I were sure we were wise,—justified."

Morgan leaned toward her and said with grave intensity, "How, dear, are the great truths of science to be ascertained unless men—men and their wives—are willing to delve lovingly, to sacrifice comforts and ever endure hardships in pursuit of them"?

Edna drew a deep breath. "But you must answer me a question. How are children to be educated, and their minds, bodies and manners guarded and formed in the ideal way on a small income such as ours"?

"I thought it was the children."

"It isn't merely the children. It's myself and you,—you Morgan. It breaks my heart to see you pale, thin and tired most of the time. You like good food and we can't afford to keep a decent cook. You have to consider every cent you spend, and the consequence is you have no amusement, and if you take a vacation, it is at some cheap place where you are thoroughly uncomfortable. And, of course, it is the children, too. If you with your talents, had gone into business or followed medicine or the law, like your friend Mr. Randall, we should have an income by this time which,—well for one thing we should be able to keep the children at the seaside until October, and for another have Ernest's teeth straightened."

"Perhaps I can manage both of those, as it is.

But, Edna, what's the advantage of considering what might have been? Besides, you haven't answered my question."

"I know it," she said slowly. "You mustn't misunderstand me, Morgan. I'm very proud of you, and I appreciate fully your talent, your self-sacrifice and your modesty. I thought you entirely right the other day in repulsing that odious reporter who wished to make a public character of you before you were ready. I'm content to wait—to wait forever, and I shall be happy in waiting. But on the other hand I've never been afraid to face the truth. It's my way. I've done so all my life; and my growth mentally and morally has come through my willingness to acknowledge my mistakes. Every one says it is fine for other people to starve for the sake of discovery, but how few are willing to do it themselves. If we were in a book, the world would admire us, but sometimes I can't help wondering if we would not be happier, and more satisfactory human products if you had done something which brought you rewards more commensurate with your abilities. I'm merely thinking aloud, Morgan. I'm intensely interested, as you know, in the problems of life, and this is one of them."

"But you know foreigners claim that we as a nation are not really interested in culture and knowledge, but only in their money value. What becomes of the best scholarship if we are ready to admit it"?

"Ah, but Professor Drayson told me only the other day, that abroad, in Germany, for instance, they give their learned professors and savants suitable salaries and make much of them socially because it is recognised that otherwise they wouldn't be willing to consecrate themselves to their work out of proper self-respect."

"Then the essential thing for me to do is to invent some apparatus which I can sell to a syndicate for half a million dollars."

"That would be very nice, Morgan," she answered, smiling brightly. "But you know perfectly well that if we go on just as we are to the end, I shall be thoroughly proud of you, and thoroughly happy—relatively speaking." So saying she put her arm around her husband's neck and kissed him affectionately.

Although this conversation was more definite than any which had taken place between them, Morgan was not seriously distressed. He knew that it was his wife's method to think aloud, and he knew that she would be just as loyal to him and no less cheerful because of it. She was considering a problem in living, and one which indisputably had two sides. He had always been aware of it, and the passage of time without special achievement on his part had brought it more judicially before him now that there were two children and the prospect of a third. He was absorbed in his vocation; and the lack of certain comforts—necessities perhaps—though in-

convenient, would not have weighed appreciably in the scale were he the only one affected. But though he was pursuing his course along the path of investigation eagerly and doing good work without a shadow of disappointment, he was aware not merely that he had not as yet made a concrete valuable discovery, but might never do so. This possibility did not appall him, but he recognised that it was a part of the circumstances of his particular case viewed from the standpoint of a contemplative judgment on his behaviour. He was succeeding, but was his success of a character to justify depriving his wife and children of what might have been theirs but for his selection? The discussion was purely academic, for he had made his choice, but he did not question Edna's privilege to weigh the abstract proposition, and accordingly was not depressed by her frankness.

It happened a few weeks later that Edna received a letter from Mrs. Sidney Dale inviting her and Morgan to spend a fortnight at the Dale spring and autumn home on the Hudson. Edna had seen Mrs. Dale but twice since their trip abroad. She had been unable to accept a previous similar invitation, but on this occasion Morgan insisted that she must go. He argued that it would refresh and rest her, and he agreed to conduct her to Cliffside and remain for a day or two himself.

Cliffside proved to be a picturesque, spacious house artistically situated at the vantage point of

a domain of twenty acres and furnished with the soothing elegancies of modern ingenuity and taste. There were appurtenant a terrace garden, a well accoutred stable, a tennis court and a steam yacht. Mrs. Dale, who had prefaced her invitation by informing her husband that she never understood exactly why she was so fond of Edna and feared that the Russells were very poor, sat, a vision of successive cool, light summer garments, doing fancy work on the piazza and talking in her engaging, brightly indolent manner. Morgan found Mr. Dale, who was taking a vacation, within telephonic reach of New York, a genial, well informed man with the effect of mental strength and reserve power. They became friendly over their cigars, and a common liking for old-fashioned garden horticulture. On the evening before he departed, Morgan, in the course of conversation, expressed an opinion concerning certain electrical appliances before the public in the securities of which his host was interested. The banker listened with keen attention, put sundry questions which revealed his own acuteness, and in pursuance of the topic gave Morgan a graphic account until after midnight of the large enterprises involving new mechanical discoveries in which his firm was engaged.

Morgan was obliged to go home on the following morning, but Edna remained a full fortnight. On the day of her return Morgan was pleased to perceive that the trip had evidently done her good.

Not only did she look brighter and fresher, but there was a sparkling gaiety in her manner which suggested that the change had served as a tonic. Morgan did not suspect that this access of spirits was occasioned by the secret she was cherishing until she confronted him with it in the evening.

"My dear," she said, "you would never guess what has happened, so I won't ask you to try. I wonder what you will think of it. Mr. Dale is going to ask you,—has asked you to go into his business,—to become one of his partners."

"Asked me"?

"Yes. It seems you made a good impression on him from the first,—especially the last evening when you sat up together. It came about through Mrs. Dale, I think. That is, Mr. Dale has been looking about for some time for what he calls the right sort of man to take in, for one of his partners has died recently and the business is growing; and Mrs. Dale seems to have had us on her mind because she had got it into her head that we were dreadfully poor. I don't think she has at all a definite idea of what your occupation is. But the long and short of it is her husband wants you. He told me so himself in black and white, and you will receive a letter from him within a day or two."

"Wants me to become a broker"?

"A banker and broker."

"And—er—give up my regular work"?

Ina nervously smoothed out the lap of her dress

as though she realised that she might be inflicting pain, but she raised her steady eyes and said with pleasant firmness—

“ You would have to, of course, won't you? But Mr. Dale explained that you would be expected to keep a special eye on the mechanical and scientific interests of the firm. He said he had told you about them. So all that would be in your line of work, wouldn't it? ”

“ I understand,—I understand. It would amount to nothing from the point of view of my special field of investigation,” he answered a little sternly. “ What reply did you make to him, Edna? ”

“ I merely said that I would tell you of the offer; that I didn't know what you would think.”

“ I wish you had refused it then and there.”

“ I couldn't do that, of course. The decision did not rest with me. Besides, Morgan, I thought you might think that we could not—er—afford to refuse it, and that as you would still be more or less connected with scientific matters, you might regard it as a happy compromise. Mr. Dale said,” she continued with incisive clearness in which there was a tinge of jubilation, “ that on a conservative estimate you could count on ten or twelve thousand dollars a year, and his manner suggested that your share of the profits would be very much more than that.”

“ The scientific part is a mere sop; it amounts to nothing. I should be a banker, engaged in float-

ing new financial enterprises and selling their securities to the public."

There was a brief silence. Edna rose and seating herself on the sofa beside him took his hands and said with solemn emphasis, "Morgan, if you think you will be unhappy,—if you are satisfied that this change would not be the best thing for us, say so and let us give it up. Give it up and we will never think of it again."

He looked her squarely in the face. "My God! Edna, I don't know *what* to answer. It's a temptation. So many things would be made easy. It comes to this, is a man justified in refusing such an opportunity and sacrificing his wife and children in order to be true to his ——" ?

She interrupted him. "If you put it that way, Morgan, we must decline. If you are going to break your heart"—

"Or yours"—

"Morgan, whichever way you decide I shall be happy, provided only you are sure. If you feel that you—we—all of us will be happier and er—more effective human creatures going on as we are, it is your duty to refuse Mr. Dale's offer."

"It's a temptation," murmured Morgan. "I must think it over, Edna. Am I bound to resist it" ?

"Bound" ?

"You know I may never be heard of in science outside of a few partial contemporaries." His lip quivered with his wan smile.

"That has really nothing to do with it," she asserted.

"I think it has, Edna," he said simply. Then suddenly the remembrance of the conversation with his friend Randall recurred to him with vivid clearness. He looked up into his wife's eyes and said, "After all, dear, it really rests with you. The modern woman is man's helpmate and counsellor. What do you advise"?

Edna did not answer for a few moments. Her open sensible brow seemed to be seeking to be dispassionate as a judge and to expel every vestige of prejudice.

"It's a very close question to decide, Morgan. Of course, there are two distinct sides. You ask me to tell you, as your wife, what I think is wisest and best. I can't set it forth as clearly as I should like,—I won't attempt to give my reasons even. But somehow my instinct tells me that if you don't accept Mr. Dale's offer, you will be sorry three years hence."

"Then I shall accept, Edna, dear," he said.

Three years later I took Mrs. Sidney Dale out to dinner at the house of a common friend in New York. In the course of conversation I remarked, "I believe it is you, Mrs. Dale, who is responsible for the metamorphosis in my friend, Morgan Russell."

"Is he a friend of yours"?

"An old friend since college days. I never any one so spruced up, shall I call it?"

gained fifteen pounds, is growing whiskers and is beginning to look the embodiment of worldly prosperity."

"It is delightful to see them,—both him and his wife. Yes, I suppose I may claim to be responsible for rescuing him from obscurity. My husband finds him a most valuable man in his business. I'm very fond of Mrs. Russell. She hasn't the obnoxious ways of most progressive women, and she certainly has executive ability and common sense. Being such an indolent person myself, I have always been fascinated by her spirit and cleverness. I'm glad she has been given a chance. They are getting on nicely, I think."

"I think she is in her element now. I was at their house the other day," I continued blandly. "It seems that Edna is prominent in various educational and philanthropic bodies, high in the councils of her club and a leading spirit in divers lines of reform. They are entertaining a good deal,—a judicious sprinkling of the fashionable and the literary. The latest swashbuckler romances were on the table, and it was evident from her tone that she regarded them as great American literature. Everything was rose colour. Morgan came home while I was there. His hands were full of toys for his children and violets for his wife. He began to talk golf. It's a complete case of ossification of the soul,—pleasant enough to encounter in daily intercourse, but sad to contemplate."

Mrs. Dale turned in her chair. "I believe you're laughing at me, Mr. Randall. What is sad? And what do you mean by ossification of the soul?"

Said I with quiet gravity. "Fifteen or twenty thousand dollars a year. Morgan Russell's life is ruined,—and the world had great hopes of him."

Mrs. Dale, who was a clever person, in spite of her disclaimers, was silent a moment. "I know what you mean, of course. But I don't agree with you in the least. And you," she added with the air of a woman making a telling point—"you the recently appointed attorney of the paper trust, with a fabulous salary, you're the last man to talk like that."

I regarded her a moment with sardonic brightness. "Mrs. Dale," I said, "it grieves us to see the ideals of our friends shattered."

"I knew I wasn't going to like that story," whispered the girl, this time to the old gentleman on her right.

"Hush! don't you understand?" whispered back the woman just behind her, who had overheard the statement.

"Understand what?"

"Why, it's his own story, told as of another. And the worst of it is that he sold himself—for his wife—and she died two years ago. There's a real tragedy."

"And now, ladies and gentlemen," spoke up the story-teller to break a pause that was becoming

awkward. "Did my friend do right? Come," he went on lightly, "The lady or the tiger? Which?"

"Look here, Randall, protested someone, "if you think you are going to switch this story-telling into a discussion of one of the world's biggest problems, you are very much mistaken."

"But should a man sell himself," persisted Randall, "for the sake of those he loves?"

"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world'?" croaked a spinster, speaking for the first time.

"We must stop his talking about it," murmured Mrs. Goddard to her husband. "Now, Jack, it's your turn," she said aloud.

"All right," dutifully spoke up the well-trained American husband. "I'll tell you a tale that will answer Randall's problem, which, as I understand it, is the conundrum: 'Is it better to sell oneself, or to sell others?' It was told me by an insurance man, and he vouched for its truthfulness. I shall stick on a little stucco here and there of my own, and I want you to notice the literary way I begin it—for I've been getting that ready ever since I realised that it would presently be 'up to me.' I'll call it AUNT NANCY'S ANNUITY, and who did the selling I'll leave you to decide."

AUNT NANCY'S ANNUITY

SHE was an elderly lady, and as the rays of the morning sun streamed through her eastern windows, she sat up in bed.

"If I only could remember! If I only could remember!" she said to herself, over and over again, knitting her brows and steadfastly staring at the footboard of her bedstead.

Suddenly an extraordinarily bright ray of light came in from the sun and gilded her brow. She winked a little, but at that movement, the contraction of her brows disappeared. She put up her hand and shielded her eyes, and, as she did so, she exclaimed: "I don't see how in the world she should know, but I'll ask her. I'll be careful about it and I don't believe it will do any harm."

Then she got up and dressed herself.

Mrs. Almira Spence was seventy years old, and a widow. She was born in 1805, and up to the Civil War had lived in peace with her husband, George Spence, on the farm which he owned and cultivated. Captain Spence—he had earned that title by his services in the Mexican War—did not belong to one of the primary Virginia families, but he was a worthy representative of that great middle class, so essential to the prosperity of every state and country. When the war broke out the years of Captain Spence—there were about fifty-five of them—might have

excused him from immediate and active participation in military operations, but he did not look at the matter in that light; and, having raised a company, he joined the Confederate army, and in the course of about eighteen months was killed.

Mrs. Spence, who had no children, took two female relatives to live with her and managed the farm as well as she could until after the fall of Richmond, and then she became frightened, and lost all interest in agriculture. Where was the good of raising crops for the benefit of an enemy who might, at any time, swoop down upon them and appropriate them to himself? She was a thrifty woman, and, at no time of her life could bear to see anything wasted; and, in fact, there were those who said that during the time that the farm was in her charge she saved more than she actually made.

Understanding her disposition it cannot be surprising that Mrs. Spence now made up her mind that not only would she cease to produce corn, wheat and tobacco, which it was probable would never be of any benefit to her, but she would endeavour to preserve, as far as possible, such portable property as she already possessed. So she gathered together all her silverware—and there was a good deal of it, for both her husband's family and her own had always taken a great interest in their silver—and she packed in a metal box such jewels as she possessed, and she buried it all.

It was not long after the interment of her valua-

bles that Mrs. Spence heard that a portion of the Northern army was marching southward. In great trepidation, she and the two female relatives sat up all night, starting with alarm at every dog bark.

Early in the morning the widow went to the front door hoping to see someone who would give her news. She did see someone. Coming round the corner of the road, not a hundred yards from the house, she saw two men on horseback. They were soldiers, and they were dressed in blue. Behind them came others; and soon more, and more.

She understood it all. These were the Yankees and they were at her very gate.

Without any further consideration of the subject, she swooned and fell upon her back in the hallway.

When Mrs. Spence had fully recovered consciousness, it was nearly noon, and the blue-coated soldiers had passed on without stopping at her farm. She took to her bed and it was several days before she was able to be about the house. And when she was able she and her companions shut up the establishment and departed to the home of another relative who lived far from the ordinary routes of travel, and far from all danger of seeing a Yankee army ride up in the cool of a pleasant morning.

In this back country of refuge Mrs. Spence remained for six years. Soon after the war was ended her farm was bought by her husband's brother for a small sum which, if carefully managed, r
"1p-
port her to the end of her life.

But, toward the close of the six years mentioned, her brother-in-law died, and, much to her surprise, left her her old farm.

When my friend first made the acquaintance of Mrs. Spence sitting up in bed, she had been at home again but one day and a night, and during that time she had not ceased—except when she was sleeping or talking to somebody—to say to herself over and over again: “If I only could remember! If I only could remember!” But it was of no use; she could not remember.

When Mrs. Spence had fallen in a swoon at her front door on that bright morning when she saw the dreaded soldiers of the North approaching her home, she had totally forgotten a great many things. Some of these, in the course of weeks or months, returned to her memory, but there was one thing she could not remember, and that was the place where she had buried her silver and her jewels.

When she had finished her breakfast, Mrs. Spence went forth upon her farm, which, in the bustle and work of her arrival she had not yet been able to do. There were a few negro servants on the place, mostly those who had been employed by her late brother-in-law, but the only one of them whom Mrs. Spence now cared to see was an old black woman by the name of Aunt Nancy, who had been for many years her especial servitor and household adviser. Aunt Nancy was now reputed to be an exceptionally old woman, and, having, on account of her age and a

trustworthy rheumatism which could be relied upon never to leave her, withdrawn from all active occupations, depending for her livelihood upon the good will of others, which, so far, had never failed her.

When her visitor came in sight, Aunt Nancy rose from her stool outside her cabin door and advanced with a quick and eager step.

"Howdy, Ole Miss?" she said, extending her hand; "I knowed you'd come down to-day, but I kinder half 'spected you yistiddy."

The two old friends had said but little to each other when Aunt Nancy abruptly asked: "I reckon de fust thing you'se gwine do, Ole Miss, is to dig up dem coffee-pots and cannelsticks?"

Mrs. Spence could not immediately find voice to speak. She trembled from head to foot. This most important question which she had expected to approach with guarded circumlocution; this great question with which, for so many years she had harried her soul; which she had never mentioned to anyone, fearing that if her brother-in-law knew of it he would claim, that with the estate he had bought everything on or in it; this great secret of her life (for how could anybody know that her family plate was not packed up in one of her boxes?) was now blurted out at her by this wrinkled old black woman.

"Aunt Nancy," she faltered, "do you know where that silver was buried?"

Nancy gazed steadily into the face

mistress, and her glance was as bright and strong as it ever had been. "Has you done gone an' forgot?" she said.

The voice of Mrs. Spence was very weak as she replied: "Yes, Aunt Nancy, I've forgotten all about it. I don't know where it was put, nor how it came to be put there, wherever it is. When the Yankees came and I fainted away, it all went out of my head, and it never has come back. But how do you know anything about it?"

"How do I know? Why, bless yo' soul, Ole Miss, I know, 'case I he'p you put it dar."

The trembling Mrs. Spence looked very much as if she were going to swoon again, for the second time in her life, but Aunt Nancy led her to her own little stool and brought her some water in a gourd.

As soon as she could speak, Mrs. Spence asked: "And have you ever told anybody of this, Aunt Nancy?"

"Tole 'em?" exclaimed she, "what I go tole anybody fer? I he'ped you bury dem coffee-pots and cannelsticks, and I jes' waited till you was ready to come and git me to he'p you to unbury 'em. I reckon dat's why I'se kep on livin' so long fer. I don't see any udder reason why I'se kep on livin'."

"Aunt Nancy," said Mrs. Spence, "tell me all about it, where is that silver buried?"

Aunt Nancy seated herself on a log of wood near by. "Well, den, dis was de way ob it. When we

all heard de Yankees was comin', you says to me: 'Aunt Nancy, you an' me has got to bury all my family silber, fer I wouldn't trus' nobody else wid knowin' whar it's put. Now whar kin we go an' dig a hole?'

"We won't have to dig no hole," says I, "fer Brown Sal is to be buried to-morrer an' deys gwine ter dig her grave dis ebenin'. When you ax me what I tell you dat fer, I says, 'dey gwine ter dig de grave in de little buryin' groun' by de woods, an' when dey've done dug it an' gone away I'll go out when de moon's up an' dig it deeper. I ain't afeard ob gittin' into no grave when dey aint nobody dar. An' den you an' me kin take all dem coffee-pots an' silber things, an' we kin lay 'em along de bottom ob de grave an' I'll kiver 'em up wid dirt an' make it as deep as it wuz befo'. Den when dey puts Brown Sal in dar, an' kivers her up dey aint nobody in dis county dat wouldn't be scared to 'sturb dat silber, eben ef dey wuz dead sure it wuz dar. Brown Sal wuz powerful wicked, an' ef de debbil didn't happen to be talkin' wid her when anybody come to dig her up, she's purty nigh as bad as de debbil hisself, an' wouldn't stan' no 'sturbance."

"But who are we going to get to move her?" asked Mrs. Spence whose agitation was now lessening, and who was beginning to look at the matter in hand in an eager, business-like way. "Brown Sal has got to be moved before we can get at the silver. And is there anybody in this place who wouldn't

be afraid to move her? I remember her. She was truly a wicked woman."

Aunt Nancy shrugged her shoulders; "Move her!" she ejaculated. "I reckon not! But dar aint no 'casion to move her. You member ole Abraham?"

"Oh, yes!" said the other, "of course I remember him."

"Brudder Abraham wuz a good man," said Aunt Nancy. "Dar wa'nt nobody in dis county nor in any nex' county dat wuz pious as he wuz. Brudder Abraham wuz buried in de grave right 'longside ob Brown Sal, an' a good deep grave, too, fer, in de days when he wuz buried de boys wa'nt half scared to death by de Yankees comin' an' dey did him mo' jestic den dey did Brown Sal, which dey put in mo' shaller. Now my way ob doin' dis thing is jes' dis. I's agwine ter dig down into Brudder Abraham's grave."

"You!" cried Mrs. Spence, "you dig!"

"Ob co'se it's me. It's got ter be me! Dar ain't nobody else on dis place to do it. A lot of triflin' fellars dat come from nobody knows whar. Ef dey didn't know 'bout Brown Sal an' wa'nt afeard of her, dem silber things would have mighty good 'casion to be afeard of dem."

"But you can't dig, Aunt Nancy!" said Mrs. Spence, "you are too old, you've got the rheumatism
—"

Aunt Nancy shrugged her shoulders; "I'se too

old an' too rheumatically to be wukkin' about de house when deys good fer nothin' young uns to do it fer me; but I aint never too old to do de wuk I don' wan' nobody else to do fer me. You let me alone fer dat, Ole Miss! I'll go to Brudder Abraham's grave, I aint scared of 'sturbin' him fer he never did speak cross to nobody when he wuz alive an' I don' reckon he'd do it now."

"Aunt Nancy," said Mrs. Spence, "what is the use of your digging into old Abraham's grave?"

"Jes' wait till I tole you, Ole Miss. I'll dig down till I gits eben wid de bottom ob Brown Sal's grave. I know zactly how far to go 'case when I done kiver up de silber I measured de deepness wid a long handled shubbil, an' de top ob de han'l jes' come eben wid de top ob de groun'. I got dat shubbil yit, fer I done hide it away in my cabin, a knowin' I'd want it agin some day. Den Ole Miss, I digs on down till I'se done gon' pas' Brown Sal; I'll dig a little furder, an' den I stops. Dem two graves is mighty close togedder, 'case der's a rock on de udder side ob Brown Sal which dem triflin' boys wuz too lazy to git out. So I takes a short han'l stove shubbil which I brings along, an' I digs away de dirt till I gits pretty nigh under Brown Sal; den I grabble under her fer dem coffee-pots, jes' like we grabble fer sweet 'taters. Den I pulls out de silber an' hans it up to you, widout 'sturbin' Brown Sal."

"Bless my soul, Aunt Nancy!" exclaimed Mrs. Spence; "how could you ever think out all that?"

"Lor, Ole Miss, I reckon as I had time enough to think it ober. Dat's about all de wuk I'se done fer many a day."

For a few moments Mrs. Spence said nothing, her mind was filled with dazzling visions of owning her family silver once again; that silver which she had begun to fear was forever lost.

"But, Aunt Nancy," she said, "how will you know when you have got it all? It will be mixed up with dirt and——"

"Oh, I'll count 'em as I han' 'em up," said Aunt Nancy, "I aint done forgit one ob 'em; two tall coffee-pots an' one little squat one what Massa George gib you when you wuz married; an' free tea-pots, one wid a black wooden han'l; fo' cream jugs; a little sugar bowl, a big sugar bowl an' a middlin' one; two big cannelsticks wid branching horns an' two tall ones what only hol' one cannel, dat yo' Aunt Helen allus said oughter been hern, an' dat you stuck out wuz yourn an' which wuz; an' two dozen forks' an' one dozen little ones; an' free dozen spoons little an' big; an' six little bits of spoons fer salt an' to put in a mustard can; an' one big tray an' a round one fer handin' cups; an' two sugar tongs, one what used to b'long to your Gran'ma; an' a big spoon fer strawberries; an' a soup ladle; an' dat wuz all 'cept two silber vegetable dishes wid tops dat wuz only used when dey wuz company. I don't forgit none ob 'em as you han' 'em down to me, de spoons an' de forks tied togedder into little bundles

wid bonnet wire wot wouldn't rot an' break. Den dar wuz dat little black tin box wot had yo' rings in an' yo' breas' pins an' dat ar long watch chain wot you danced wid de Gub'ner in when you wuz young in Richmond. An' dat's all of 'em cept my big scissors dat I thought I might as well save from de Yankees while I wuz about it. An' so I wrop 'em up in a hankercher an' stick 'em in mong de udder things."

"And you really believe, Aunt Nancy," said Mrs. Spence, who so well remembered every article the old woman mentioned, "that all these things are still there?"

"Dey done got to be dar! Dey aint nobody to take em out cept it wuz Brown Sal herself, an' she couldn't git at 'em 'case dey wuz unner her; do' she wuz bad 'nough, de Lor' knows to han' em out up throo de dirt to some triflin' nigger dat wuz a waitin' fer 'em on top."

This supposition did not frighten Mrs. Spence. She rose; "Aunt Nancy," she said, "when shall we go to work to get out that silver?"

"Dis berry night. To-morrer night as like as not it'll be thunnerin' an' lightnin' an' rainin' an' pourin', an' I don' wan' to dig into no graves in a thunner storm. De moon will be up by ten o'clock an' all de folks will be in bed."

"Shall we meet here?"

Aunt Nancy shook her head. "Dat would be dangersome, Ole Miss. Ef we go to de graveyard

sep'rate we less likely to be seed, an' mo' likely to be took fer spooks ef we is."

The moon, somewhat past the full, was just visible above the horizon, when Mrs. Almira Spence slipped out of a door in the wing of her house—the relative who lived with her had been asleep for an hour—and swiftly made her way to the graveyard by the woods. This was a small triangular space in the corner of a field, enclosed by a rail fence and overshadowed by trees. Two generations back it had been used for a burial place for the slaves of the estate. A rough stone was at the head and foot of each grave, but there were no inscriptions. When Aunt Nancy should die there would be no one in the world who would be qualified to say anything positive in regard to the occupancy of these graves, now crowded closely together and overgrown with grass and wild flowers. Mrs. Spence had attended the funeral of some of these old servants, but that was long, long ago.

As she approached the enclosure she heard a slight grating sound occurring at intervals; and when she reached the fence she saw a spadeful of earth rise out of the ground. It was quickly thrown out and the empty spade disappeared. The bars of the fence were down, and she hurried in. Aunt Nancy was in a great hole which hid her when she stooped, and she was throwing spadefuls of light sandy loam with great rapidity and regularity.

"Why, Aunt Nancy," exclaimed Mrs. Spence,

looking down upon her, "how much you have done! How long have you been here?"

The old woman stopped digging; "Oh, I come as soon as dey all done gone to bed," she said. "I wanted to git de whole business done fo' you come. I aint done yit but pretty nigh. I'se got down eben wid Brown Sal an' I'll pass her mighty quick." And she began again to dig violently.

In vain Mrs. Spence urged the old woman to stop and rest herself. Aunt Nancy grinned.

"Don' wan' to stop till I'se done," she said. "Bless yo' soul, Ole Miss, dar aint no tire in me! Lor! how dem triflin' boys would open dere eyes ef dey could see me dig. Dey'd neber cut me anudder stick ob wood, nor fotch me anudder pail ob water."

Ten minutes passed, and then Aunt Nancy stopped and measured the depth of the hole with her long-handled spade.

"I'se below her now," she said, "an' ef you'll han' me dat little short-han'l shubble, I'll begin grabblin'. I don' wan' to dig down too fur. Brudder Abraham wuz a mighty pious man, but I don' wan' to git down 'mongst him."

On her knees went Aunt Nancy and with great energy she began digging with a short-handled shovel into one side of her narrow excavation. She dug rapidly but cautiously, and when she thought she had gone as far as she dared with her shovel she began to dig with her long, black hands, bringing out stones and small lumps of earth which she

threw on each side of her. Suddenly there was a sharp exclamation, almost a yell, and Aunt Nancy bounded out of that hole as if she had been a big black cat, startling Mrs. Spence so that she nearly fell backward. The old woman stood trembling.

"Lor, Ole Miss!" she exclaimed, "I done got hol' ob Brown Sal's leg!"

Mrs. Spence was shocked and disappointed. Until this moment she had not believed that anything could frighten Aunt Nancy and make her abandon the work at which she had laboured with such energy and zeal.

"What are you talking about, Aunt Nancy?" said she. "That's impossible!"

"Not fer Brown Sal," said the other. "She done stuck her leg thoo her bottom boards."

"Aunt Nancy," said the now anxious Mrs. Spence, "I don't believe a word of all that! I am going to get down into that hole myself. I can't stop hunting for my silver, Brown Sal or no Brown Sal!"

Mrs. Almira Spence was seventy years old, but she was thin and wiry and still active. She backed herself into the hole and, accompanied by a good deal of falling gravel, she reached the bottom. Kneeling down she cautiously put one hand into the opening which Aunt Nancy had made. Feeling about, she touched something which might have been Brown Sal. Suppose it should be! But Mrs. Spence felt that nothing must frighten her. The

business which had led her down into the darkness of the earth was too important. She pulled and she pulled, and directly she sprang to her feet.

"Look at that Aunt Nancy!" she cried, and tearing a piece of dirty linen cloth from an object which she held up in the moonlight. "That's the big coffee-pot, and you had hold of the spout!"

Aunt Nancy clutched the coffee-pot and, for an instant, she clasped it to her breast. "Come, git out ob dat, Ole Miss!" she cried, "I'se gwine down now. Gib me yo' han' an' I'll h'ist you up."

After some vigourous tugs and some scrambling and scratching, Mrs. Spence emerged from the hole, into which Aunt Nancy immediately jumped. The short shovel and the long bony fingers now began to work with nervous energy, and, in a few minutes, Aunt Nancy rose to her feet; "Dat's de squat one, Ole Miss," she said, "I know it by its feel."

For nearly an hour the digging and the scrambling below, and the delivery of the recovered treasure above went on, Aunt Nancy repeating the name of each article as she handed it up. The japanned box with the rings and the breastpins was the last thing recovered, for it had been buried a little distance from the silver; and then Aunt Nancy stood up and repeated over the names of the articles as if she had been reading them from a written list. Mrs. Spence put them to one side as their names were called. Everything was there. She could scarcely refrain from crying with joy as she saw, lying be-

fore her on the grass in the moonlight, the family silver of her childhood; the cherished silver plate of her young married days; the familiar treasures of nearly her whole life. For some moments she did not speak. The whole world had been changed for her. She could not speak of what had happened; she could not even think coherently. She stooped to pick up some of the uncanny looking articles which lay about in their earth-stained coverings.

"Aunt Nancy," she presently said, "we must hurry and take these things to the house; we may have to make several trips."

Aunt Nancy turned and looked at her for a moment. "Not till I'se filled up dis hole."

"Why do you bother about the hole?" said the other, "when the silver is all safe in the house it won't matter who sees the hole."

"Ole Miss," said Aunt Nancy standing very upright, with the spade in her hand, "does you 'spose I'se gwine away and leave Brudder Abraham un-kivered? Does you 'spose I kin sleep in my bed an' think o' dat ar pious man wid de rain arainin' down into his grave, an' de thunner athunnerin' down into it, an' de lightnin' alightnin' down into it? Oh, no, Ole Miss, I'se got to kiver up Brudder Abraham fust. Plenty ob time to tote dem things when dat is done."

When the hole was filled up, the earth trampled down and smoothed over, and the newly dug soil partly covered with leaves and sticks, the transporta-

tion of the silver plate began; and long before morning it was safely deposited in the bureau drawers of the guest chamber on the first floor, from which it had been taken when the news came that the Yankees were marching into the county.

"To-morrer," said Aunt Nancy, "I'll come an' I'll clean all dat silber. Nobody eber done it but me sence I wuz growed up. Dat's de way I know'd zactly eberyting what Brown Sal had under her."

A month passed, and Mrs. Spence determined to sell her silver. Every piece of it had been cleaned and polished by the vigorous arm of Aunt Nancy. Day by day its owner had sat gazing upon it and living over again the happy days when it had adorned her sideboard and her table. And yet, she had made up her mind to sell it, and with the proceeds to buy an annuity. She was poor. Under her management her farm could not be very productive. She did not expect to indulge in hospitalities in which family plate would fitly figure; she had no direct heirs, and she wisely concluded that the best thing her silver could do for her would be to support her for the rest of her days.

Business friends in Richmond were consulted and they approved; and, after a good deal of correspondence, many tears, three visits from jewellers and one from the agent of an Annuity Company, the business was consummated. The silver had been found valuable, not only on account of the weight of the metal, but because of its quaint and antique designs;

and the jewelry in the black tin box proved to be worth much more than its owner had ever supposed.

The silver had been so well preserved that there were no imperfect sets, except in one instance—a package which should have contained a dozen table-spoons was found to lack one spoon. But Mrs. Spence and Aunt Nancy both agreed that it would not pay to again run the risk of disturbing Brown Sal or Brother Abraham for the sake of one tablespoon.

The family treasures were gone, and Mrs. Spence was in receipt of a small income for life. In all these proceedings Aunt Nancy took an active interest. At first her soul rebelled against the sacrifice, as she considered it, of the silver which she had adored and cleaned since she was a mere girl; but before the eloquent reasoning of Mrs. Spence she had gradually withdrawn her opposition; and when her old mistress informed her, that, as she had been the main agent in bringing about this new era of prosperity, she should share in it; and, that whenever Mrs. Spence received an annuity payment, her faithful old servant should be given a certain, though small, portion of it, her joy and gratitude were all-pervasive.

“ I kin see de sun shine in de middle ob de night ! ” she exclaimed. “ Ebery minute de soul widin me hops an’ sings. Dat ar money reglar ebery month as long as I live! Glory! Glory! Glory! ”

"You are not quite right, Aunt Nancy," said Mrs. Spence, "you'll get your money as long as I live, but you won't get any after that."

"Oh!" exclaimed Aunt Nancy, a new light breaking in upon her, "dat's de way ob it, eh? When you's gone to de udder side ob Jordan dar aint no use ob me stayin' on dis sho'. My money stop off short wid Ole Miss?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Spence, "it'll stop off short."

From this moment the great object of Aunt Nancy's life was to make Mrs. Almira Spence live as long as possible. Never was man, woman, or child more carefully guarded and watched over by day and by night. Aunt Nancy, like a lean and dusky guardian angel stood, as far as she was able, between her mistress and every danger.

Over and over again did Mrs. Spence regret that she had made clear to Aunt Nancy the nature of an Annuity. She found that she was no longer an independent woman; she was a slave to the ceaseless vigilance of one who had once belonged to her.

Aunt Nancy left her old cabin and established herself in the house. She was a body-servant, a counsellor, and, sometimes a despot. Often in the middle of the night, Mrs. Spence would hear the window in her chamber which she had left open, come slowly down, and she knew very well who was lowering it.

"Aunt Nancy," she once said, "do you want to suffocate me?"

“ Bless yo’ soul, Ole Miss,” was the reply, “ I’d be de las’ pusson in dis worl’ to do dat! But I can’t bar to think of dem ’nuity people gettin’ rich froo yo’ sleepin’ in de col’ night ar.”

“ Bother on you, Aunt Nancy!” exclaimed Mrs. Spence, turning irritably in her bed, “ I’d rather take cold and die and be done with it, than to have you fussing about me this way by day and by night.”

“ Dat’s all bery well for you, Ole Miss, when you dead an’ gone you won’ care no mo’ ’bout de money; it’s dem what is lef’ behin’ wat’s got to be thinked ob.”

In her eating and drinking, Mrs. Spence was as uncomfortable as Sancho Panza under the eye of the court physician. If it were possible for Aunt Nancy to prevent it, nothing unwholesome ever passed the lips of her mistress. The cucumber vines in the garden died before the fruit was large enough to eat, and it was discovered that every one of them had been cut near the root. Aunt Nancy was an excellent cook and insisted upon making all the cake, and she made it so plain and wholesome that Mrs. Spence could scarcely eat it.

Once the good lady determined to break loose from this beneficent tyranny, and she offered Aunt Nancy a lump sum in place of her regular allowance. The poor old soul was so distressed at the idea of losing her monthly income, that the proposition was withdrawn and referred to no more.

Mrs. Almira Spence was seventy years old, but she was well-preserved in face and figure. She was erect; she was active, and, when she was not conscious of the sleepless vigilance of Aunt Nancy, she was lively. Good health; a good house, and a sufficient income gave her an air of satisfaction and content which decreased her apparent age and added greatly to her attractions in the eyes of her friends and acquaintances. It was not at all surprising, therefore, that there were occasional remarks in regard to matrimonial possibilities in the direction of Mrs. Spence. People had even gone so far as to pick out this or that desirable elderly gentleman who would be a good match for her. It seemed a pity that she should not have someone to help her enjoy her pleasant fortune.

When Aunt Nancy first heard these remarks—and there were very few things said about Mrs. Spence that she did not hear—she was greatly disturbed. If her "Ole Miss" should get married everything in that household would be upset, and in the midst of the general wreck and ruin she saw herself back in her little cabin, of no good to anybody and nobody caring for her, and, most likely, without a regular income. In all the different ways in which she had to work in order to make Mrs. Spence live long and prosper, guarding her against wedlock was one of the most important. No duenna, sleeping with one ear open that she might hear the first tinkle of a guitar under the window above her young ward,

ever kept a sharper lookout for lovers, than did old Aunt Nancy.

One morning as the old woman was on her way from the house to her cabin, she saw approaching, a gentleman on horseback. Aunt Nancy knew him instantly. It was Mr. Hobson Baldwin, a very reputable elderly gentleman of the neighbourhood and an old friend of the Spence family. Aunt Nancy's eyes flashed and, in a moment they told her that this visitor had on his Sunday clothes and a new straw hat. This was soul chilling. He also held in his hand a store whip. Never before had she seen Mr. Hobson Baldwin ride with anything better than a switch cut from a tree. The old woman's soul was agitated. Had this man on horseback been Mr. Frederick Baldwin, who had a wife and five children, she would have viewed his approach with composure, but Mr. Hobson was a bachelor.

"Morning, Aunt Nancy," said Mr. Baldwin, "I am glad to see you can get about so spry. Is Mrs. Spence at home?"

The old woman would have snapped back at him an answer in kind but she was too wary for that. It would never do to make him angry or he might pass her without further remark.

"Yes, suh," said she, "she at home, but she aint seen nobody dis mornin'."

"Isn't she well?" asked Mr. Hobson Baldwin.

"Oh, yes!" said Aunt Nancy, "she's well as she

ever is, but she ain't see nobody dis mornin', nor dis ebenin', but I reckon de glue'l be dry to-morrer."

"Glue!" asked Mr. Hobson, "what glue?"

"Now I didn't 'tend to tell you dat," said Aunt Nancy, "fer I know Ole Miss wouldn't like it, but it jes' slip out, an' I hopes you won' tell her dat I tole you. But de fac' is, she bus' her wig las' night an' I'se gwine down to my house to git de glue pot what I took down dar las' week to men' a cheer. I done tole her long 'go dat dat wig wuz gibin way an' dat it would bus' some day' an' dat she oughter buy a new one, but Ole Miss she says dat she wo' dat so long an' got used to de feel ob it. An' mo'n dat ef she got a new one ev'ybody'd know it, an' den nex' thing they'd be 'spicionin' her teeth, an' she wouldn't hab dat happen fer anything in dis worl'. An' so she stuck to her ol' wig an' las' night it bus' jes' as I done tole her 'twould over an' over agin. An' de ole har come out long de broken edges so dat even ef dey wuz sewed togedder dar'd be a long empty streak long de middle like a pahth down de gyarden. So now I am goin' to git de glue an' we's goin' to glue it togedder, an' den we's goin' to take de hars what is lef' out an' dip de en's in de glue an' stick 'em in de wig. An' I 'specs de glue'l be dry to-morrer ebenin', so ef you comes long den, I reckon she'll see you. Ob cose I'se goin' to do de bes' I kin fer her but I don' believe in dat wig. De nex' thing she knows it'll bus' somewhar's else an' she'll have to

take to wearin' caps wid little fronts sewed in over her for'ad."

For a moment, Mr. Hobson Baldwin did not speak, then he asked "What was that you said about teeth, Aunt Nancy? Mrs. Spence certainly has very fine teeth."

"Indeed she has," said she proudly, "she's got de very bes' an' bein' able to 'ford it she wouldn't have no udders. Only las' fall she sont 'em down to Richmond—bein' better able to spar 'em den, den any udder time ob de yar der bein' so many soft vegetables—an' had 'em all screwed up an' polished."

Mr. Baldwin turned his horse's head. "If Mrs. Spence is engaged," he said, "there'll be no use of my going up to the house."

"Ole Miss'll be mighty sorry to hear you'se been here an' not come in but ef you come to-morrer ebenin, suh, I reckon de glue'll be all dry. But I hope suh, dat you won' tell Ole Miss——"

But Mr. Hobson Baldwin did not stay to hear the rest of the remark. He had no further business at that house, and he had put on his Sunday clothes for nothing.

It is astonishing how a man may sometimes see through a little crack in the wall the untoward things which lie upon the other side. Mr. Hobson Baldwin thanked his stars for the happy chance which enabled him to put his eye to that crack.

"Aunt Nancy," said Mrs. Spence, when the old woman had returned from her cabin with the flat-

iron she had been sent for, "did I see you talking to somebody on horseback?"

"Oh, yes, Ole Miss," said Aunt Nancy, "dat wuz ole Mr. Hobson Baldwin. He come to borry a glue pot. I done tole him we didn't have none, not doin' our own carpenter work. An' he said he wuz mighty sorry for he wuz goin' to Richmond to-morrer an' he done bus' his wig. An' I tole him dat glue wa'nt no good to men' a wig wid an' he'd better buy a new one, but he said he'd wo' dat ole one so long he'd kinder got used to it. So he said he'd ride on to Mr. Montgomery Harris's an' see ef he'd got a glue pot dar. I ax him to come in an' res' hisself but he said he couldn't stop anywhar whar he'd hafter take off his hat."

"I didn't believe Mr. Hobson Baldwin was so foolish as that," said Mrs. Spence. "I always supposed he wore his own hair. But if he is bald he must be a very silly old man to try to hide it. I'd always thought better of Mr. Hobson Baldwin than that."

Mrs. Spence never said anything about the unfortunate vanity of her old neighbour, but he was not so reticent and there was a good deal of talk about the "busted" wig that Aunt Nancy was going to try to mend with the glue pot.

People came to the house as they always had done, sometimes in their Sunday clothes and sometimes in ordinary apparel, and very often, when they happened to be women, they cast sharp eyes upon Mrs.

Spence's neatly parted hair and wondered how old Aunt Nancy and her mistress could have made such a very good job with the glue pot.

Aunt Nancy saw no more elderly gentlemen in their Sunday clothes come riding toward the house. The great fear that "Ole Miss" might renounce her widowhood passed from the old woman.

And now great peace settled down upon that household. The two female relatives died and were buried, and two younger persons took their places. Aunt Nancy never ceased her watchful vigilance; the lower pie-crust of pies was never seen in that house, and husbands were unthought of. Year after year kept rolling on, and the Annuity people in Richmond began to talk a good deal about the old lady in the lower part of the State. They said to each other that she must have an extraordinarily good hold on life.—But then, of course, they knew nothing about Aunt Nancy.

More years passed on. Mrs. Spence continued active with a good appetite and Aunt Nancy continued vigilant, although not quite so vigilant as she had been, for the reason that her mistress had become so well trained in regard to sanitary methods that she became very easy to manage.

At last, at the age of ninety-three, she died and her annuity stopped.

After the funeral, Aunt Nancy removed back to her old cabin. She liked it better there, and her duty at the big house was done. The new owner of

the place—one of the younger relatives now married—was very kind to the old woman who was entirely satisfied except in one respect. What she called her annuity had also stopped. This, according to Aunt Nancy, was a perversion of the natural order of things. Her income had ceased to be, and she had not.

One day there came from Richmond, two legal gentlemen to attend to some business regarding the property. Aunt Nancy knew who they were and she knew what they had come for, and her eyes twinkled with an eager interest as she sat in front of her cabin and watched the doorway through which they entered the house. Her rheumatism had come upon her again, now that there was no reason for its being ignored, but it did not prevent her from walking as far as she wanted to walk, and when the gentlemen came out after dinner to smoke their cigars on the piazza, they found Aunt Nancy there waiting for them.

The old woman made a deferential courtesy. She would not allow her rheumatism to interfere with her manners.

"Mornin', Mr. Scott," she said, "Mornin' Mr. Wilson Green."

"I'se come to see you gemmen on business."

They looked with surprise upon the tall old woman supporting herself by a long staff; her black and shrunken face; her keen, bright eyes, shining in their deep sockets, and they told her to sit down

upon a bench and say what she wanted. But she declined the civility.

"Scuse me, gemmen," she said, "but it's a good deal harder to git up dan to stay up, an' I'se been waitin' on Ole Miss Spence putty nigh all my life, an' knows better."

"Very well then," said Mr. Scott, "what is it?"

"Gemmen," said she, looking from one to the other as if in doubt as to which was the leading spirit, "I wants a 'nuity."

They smiled, and looked at each other. "It seems to me," said Mr. Wilson Green, "that you are a little past that sort of thing. Do you know anything about annuities?"

"Deed I does," said Aunt Nancy, with an emphatic nod of her head. "I libed under de blessins ob one for twenty-two year, an' now it is done stopped."

"And you're still living?" exclaimed Mr. Wilson Green.

"Taint my 'nuity," said Aunt Nancy, "It war Ole Miss', but I libed under its blessins all de same. Ebery time her money come in she gib me jes' so much, year in an' year out, jes' so much ebery time her money come in an' now she dead an' her 'nuity stopped an' I wan's 'nuity ob my own. Ole Miss' 'nuity las' jes' as long as she lib, an' I wan's one to las' as long as I lib."

The two lawyers were greatly interested as well

as amused. "How old are you, Auntie?" asked Mr. Scott.

"I'se ninety-one years ole nex' February, full ob de moon. I know dat's right fer my ol' mammy tole me I wuz bo'n February full ob de moon; an' my ole Missus tole me dat she wuz jes' two year older dan me, an' she wuz ninety-three when 'nuity stopped. So dar I've got it all straight—ninety-one years ole nex' February at de full ob de moon. I spose you wan'ter put dat down in de papers, gemmen so I've done gib it you all straight."

"Auntie," said Mr. Scott, "I think you will have to give up your little scheme. Annuities are not taken out by people as old as you are. At ninety-one no one would be expected to live long enough to get any good out of an annuity. If you have any money saved up that you are thinking of investing in that way, you had better keep it and make yourself comfortable with it. It would likely do you more good that way than if you handed it over to an Annuity Company, which you couldn't do anyway, for they wouldn't take it."

Aunt Nancy's eyes now began to sparkle and her manner was not quite so respectful as it had been. "Money saved up!" she exclaimed. "Who said anything about money saved up? Dat's got nuffin to do wid anything. Gemmen," she continued rapidly as if wishing to change the subject, "I'se got here some family silber an' I wan's to sell it an' buy a 'nuity."

With this she put her hand into a deep pocket in

her skirt, and pulled out a brightly polished silver spoon. "Dar dat spoon, gemmen," said she, "Dat's part ob de ole family silber. When Ole Miss an' me took dat silber from whar we done put it dar wuz one dozen ob dem spoons, but when she sold her silber dar wuz on'y 'leben. It did break my heart to see all dat silber go wot had been in de family so long, an' so dis one, it didn' go."

One of the lawyers was about to say something but the other checked him.

"Yes, gemmen," continued the old woman, "dis one stay behind fer de sake ob de family. Dar wa'nt nobody in dis worl' could come here an' say dar wa'nt no family silber in dis house. When Ole Miss die she lef' dat spoon to me."

"Did she leave it in her will?" asked Mr. Scott.

Aunt Nancy looked at him sternly. "I didn't say nuffin 'bout no will. She jes lef' it to me. She didn't take it 'way wid her, did she? Ef I'd died afore she had I'd a lef' it to her. But she died fust an' she lef' it to me. Now you see, gemmen," Aunt Nancy continued, not wishing further interruptions, "I wants to sell dis spoon an' buy a 'nuity which will come in reg'lar, click, click, like a clock, as long as I lib, an' den it kin stop."

"Aunty," said Mr. Wilson Green, as he took the spoon in his hand and looked at it, "how much longer do you expect to live?"

She looked at him earnestly. "I reckon I'll lib as long as Ole Miss."

"That will be two years longer then," remarked Mr. Wilson Green.

"Yes, suh," said the old woman, "I reckon dat's right—'bout two years mo'—same as Ole Miss. Now Mr. Wilson Green an' Mr. Scott ef you'se willin' to make glad de soul ob a po' ole woman you take dat spoon wid you to Richmond an' sell it dar an' buy me a 'nuity." And as she spoke she extended the spoon towards them.

Mr. Scott took it and weighed it in his hand. "It is a good heavy spoon," he said, "but, Aunty, no matter how old you might be, you couldn't sell it for enough to buy an annuity."

Aunt Nancy made no reply, but her staff slightly shook and the tears came into her eyes.

"Don't know about that," said Mr. Wilson Green taking the spoon. "This is a very heavy spoon. It seems to me that we might take it to Richmond and see what we could do. "Of course," he said addressing Aunt Nancy, "if we should get you an annuity it would be a very little one. Would that satisfy you?"

The old woman turned towards him and clasped her staff in her two hands. "It aint de little I'se thinkin' 'bout, Mr. Wilson Green," said she, "it's de reg'lar. I don' min' its bein' little ef it comes in click, click like a clock, month in an' month out, year in an' year out, till I stops an' it stops. An' dat will be de en' ob de family silber."

When that tablespoon went to Richmond it was

talked about a good deal, and laughed about a good deal, and pooh-poohed a good deal when Mr. Wilson Green attempted to talk seriously about it, but he was persistent and at last the spoon was sold and the annuity was granted. Partly because nobody wanted to darken the last days of a poor old woman, and partly because, the transaction would be a curiosity in the annals of the business as the smallest annuity, and the oldest annuitant ever known.

No considerations of charity were allowed to enter into this transaction, for that would have spoiled its distinctive character, and taken away its point. It was made, as Aunt Nancy wished it to be, a strictly business matter.

Month after month passed on, and year after year, and steadily and regularly Aunt Nancy's Annuity came in, click, click like a clock. It was very little, but it was regular, and the old woman was happy.

It was about two years after the death of Mrs. Spence, when there came to Aunt Nancy's cabin the lady to whom the property now belonged. The old woman—now very old—blacker than ever and more wrinkled and thinner, called out to her visitor before she had reached the cabin door.

“Mornin' Miss Ca'line, I'se mighty glad to see you, I's got sompin' to tell you. You'se been mighty kind to me, Miss Ca'line—not so kind as Ole Miss case dat wa'nt to be 'spected, you not bein' Ole Miss—but mighty kind, specially 'bout white sugar an' sof' bread. Now I wan's to tell you, Miss Ca'line, dat

dat ar 'nuity ob mine is gwine to run out purty soon, I feels dat in my bones, specially in de leg bones, an' when dat ar 'nuity runs out, Miss Ca'line, I wan's you to hab de spoon. You'se been mighty good to me an' you'se de one dat oughter hab dat spoon."

"But, Aunt Nancy," said the other in surprise, "the spoon isn't yours to give, you parted with it when you bought your annuity."

"But when I'se dead," said the old woman, her eyes twinkling, "I reckon dat ar 'nuity'll stop. Aint dat so?"

"Oh, yes!" said Miss Caroline, "of course it'll stop but——"

"Well den," interrupted Aunt Nancy, "no 'nuity, no spoon. Dey mus' be mighty no 'count folks ef dey 'spects to pay no money an' keep de spoon."

Miss Caroline attempted to explain, and even began to cite the case of Mrs. Spence, whose silver had not come back when she died, but it was all of no use, Aunt Nancy would not listen to such fallacies.

"No 'nuity, no spoon," said she, "an' on 'count ob de white sugar, an' de sof' bread' an' I done forgot de sassage, de spoon is yourn."

A few weeks later there came to Miss Caroline, a package from Richmond, secured after considerable expense and many solicitations, and with it in her hand the good lady went over to Aunt Nancy's cabin.

"Is dat de spoon?" asked Aunt Nancy, from her bed, when the wrappings had been removed.

"Yes," said Miss Caroline, "this is the spoon."

"Dem dar folks in Richmond mus' be mighty hones'," said the old woman, taking the spoon in her hand and gazing upon it with all the interest in life which was left to her. "Dey's sent it back fo' dey's bleegd to." Then she gazed upon it a little longer. "Lor' bless my soul," she said, "how Brown Sal mus' bin disgruntled at knowin' dat ar spoon an' all de res' ob de silber wuz close up ginst her an' she not able to make no use ob none ob it."

A few days after this, Aunt Nancy's annuity ceased. She was buried in a better place than the crowded graveyard where Uncle Abraham and Brown Sal rested, and over the mantelpiece of the "big house" there hung, as her memorial, the old-fashioned spoon which had brought her her annuity.

"Now I want Mr. Wickam to tell us a story," announced Mrs. Goddard, not even leaving a moment for comment on her husband's tale.

Silence.

"Where are you, Mr. Wickam?" she went on, when there was no response.

"I think he's gone," explained a man. "I heard some one back of me steal away just a minute before Mr. Goddard ended, and I suppose it was he."

"How mean of him!" cried the hostess. "Our one real author, upon whom I was counting, and for him to desert us."

"It was probably jealousy," suggested Harold.

"Or perhaps he wanted to jot down a few of our ideas for future use. Don't flatter him by letting him know that he was missed. Here's Bowden itching to tell the story, I've watched him concocting for the last fifteen seconds."

"All right, old chap," acceded the person addressed. "You told us a lie we all believed; now I'll tell you a true story that not one of you will. Understand, I don't attempt to explain it. I will call the story **THE MESSENGER.**"

THE MESSENGER

“I DON'T know whether there are such things as supernatural beings—who does know? But I know of *one* queer experience. Some of you remember Guy Thurston. He was at the same school with me, when I was a boy. It was there his wonderful voice first attracted attention. He wasn't a bit the sort of a fellow you would have given a lovely, heart-breaking, ethereal sort of voice to, you know; not he; he was a stolid looking, big, muscular football player with a kind of dogged application, either in games or study which made up for his being none too nimble with his wits. He did have horse sense, however; and I always remember the speech he made to the sixth form (we were painfully English in our school, when we weren't painfully military) the time we all got expelled except him. You see it came about in this fashion. Three of the most popular boys were expelled for going out of bounds to a little town near by, where we had always been allowed to go; but for some reason the orders went out that we must not go any more, liberty had been abused and that sort of thing; and there was a new master who didn't understand boys; and in short there was a silly and unnecessary mess, and the hot heads got excited. The three boys who disobeyed were leaders, and it was felt that the punishment was disproportionate to the

offence. Boys always think that, you know. We held an indignation meeting and thought ourselves mighty fine when we determined to have the entire sixth form go in a body. The Head-master never would dare, we reasoned, expel the whole sixth only a month before commencement; and if we petitioned later for the other three fellows' reinstatement, we might get it; anyhow we were to send in a petition, and should it be refused we were all to go. We had the meeting. I wasn't very keen; but I followed the pack. There was a lot of fiery speeches which we thought tremendous. Finally, Guy got up. He was so quiet that he wasn't particularly popular; and he was a shy fellow, always. I hadn't noticed him particularly until that day; but I looked at him with a certain kind of interest; he was so pale. Stupid as boys are in some ways and too busy with their own concerns to pay attention to other fellows' troubles, his looks caught my attention. His black hair was matted on his forehead and his eyes slanted under his knitted brows with a queer dogged look. As he began his voice was not quite round and full; he seemed to be steadying it by his will. But before he finished every word was loud and clear and rang through the room. He told the boys in plain English that they were making fools of themselves, the Doctor never would give in; and they would be expelled as surely as the sun would shine next morning; and whether the Doctor was right or wrong they couldn't afford to be expelled. Their fathers

wouldn't see the matter as they did, they needn't think it; and their mothers would cry and there would be a lot of trouble. Well, one or two of the boys weakened a bit at that; I did, myself; I knew that my father would be furious. He *was*. But Guy was only one, and the others didn't make much of a move for him. I cracked a few jokes about how nasty our governors could be; and advised the fellows to go slow; but the current ran the other way. The end was that we defied the Head and went off on the meekest and stupidest little bat you ever saw—simply drove out to the town and drove back. Guy wouldn't go with us. I did go. "You fellows are making crazy looneys of yourselves, and putting us all into a hole," I grumbled, "but I'm not going back on you." That was my notion of honour, you understand. What idiots boys can be! When the boys came back, however, it wasn't so funny. The Head was standing in the street and we came upon him. He was a big man who used to stand with his legs a little apart and his head well back on his neck. He was a stern looking fellow, but the sixth was his pet; and there was always a kind of twinkle in his eye as he acknowledged our salutes. To-day, he looked at us with an inscrutable I almost thought sorrowful face. It was horribly embarrassing to meet him; but first, two or three, then all of us lifted our caps; he lifted his black silk hat, none too well brushed and shining—he was a bit careless in his dress. The wind blew his grey

hairs about; and something smote on my hard boyish heart; I had the faintest glimmer of the cruelty of our action. After all, we were trying to drive the old boy into a brutal mean hole, where he must either go back on his word and he was a staunch keeper of his word, even to his own hurt, or lose his whole graduating class and get a beastly lot of criticism for depriving the school of so much revenue, and mortifying it before the world. But you may be sure I didn't lisp a word of my feelings. Guy was standing in the quadrangle, when we drove up in arrant defiance of all the rules. Not one of us noticed him; he gave us a military salute. Not even Tom Derby, his roommate, or Ellerton, his closest chum, returned it. Guy's face went white; and then, in a flash, I remembered that I believed in our folly as well as he, although I had succumbed to the wills of the foolish and thrown my lot in with theirs; of a sudden it was clear to me, whatever Guy's motive, he had not opposed us or drawn away from us because he was a milksop who wanted to curry favour. For that matter I doubt whether the Doctor, himself, didn't secretly despise Guy's loyalty. But in that second, seeing Guy's white, miserable face, I didn't; and, on the impulse I made a salute. Guy made no response, unless a quiver of his mouth and a single glance could be a response. He walked away with his shoulders up, stiff and military. That evening, the class was expelled—except Guy Thurston. There was excitement in plenty, then.

The boys were very haughty, at first; but after they changed the heated school atmosphere for the chill of conservative homes; and had seen their unenthusiastic fathers, they grew milder; in the end, they very willingly signed a humble request and apology. But it was no use; the doctor was inflexible. I as an original opposer of the rebellion was sent with the petition. Thus, it was, I saw Guy, again, he looked ill and haggard. I knew that he had been requested to resign from the football eleven and that the school had sent him to Coventry; it was their only way to show sympathy; and they showed it with vigour. I believe, this time, it was only the memory that I had committed myself to recognising Guy, already, which made me bow to him. On his part, his face flushed all over and he caught at my proffered hand with a sob. "I tried to see you and say good-bye to you," said he, "but you'd gone. I—I had a jolly big basket of oranges come to me and I thought you might like to have them on the way, you and the other fellows."

"I think we felt too mad and too rocky to care much for oranges," I said ungraciously, "we weren't going back to any picnic. It was a *circus* in my case!"

"And I was wishing I could go with you. Oh Lord, how I wanted to be on that train!"

"Why weren't you, then?" I said, still pretty stiffly, "you weren't any more opposed to all that rot than I was!"

Guy caught his breath; "Would you like me to tell you?"

"Yes, I would. I know you're a straight fellow"—I was veering to sympathy again—"and you never seemed to be stuck on getting merit marks or being a pet with the faculty—"

Guy used some strong and improper expressions about the faculty.

"Well, what *was* it?"

"I promised my mother."

I studied his face and his downcast eyes. I dimly remembered that the boys made fun of Guy not so much because his mother wrote him almost every day, which although queer, when a boy was not a new boy being hazed nearly to death and crying with homesickness when after he thought the other boys were asleep and couldn't hear him, was still not reprehensible; but because Guy wrote quite as often to her. Remarks had been made; and Guy had pounded the wit of the school so that the wit wasn't able to go to recitations the next day; and Guy had to walk guard for three days. I also remembered that Guy's father was dead and he was his mother's only child; and that his uncle paid for his schooling. I was not yet sure that Guy was justified according to schoolboy ethics, but I was less sure that he was guilty. "Oh, that was it, was it?" I muttered, "but how did she know anything about it?"

"Would you mind sitting down here with me?"

said Guy. "Some of the boys were ogling us curiously; but I was too sore over the scrape I was in, and the crowd of them for egging us into it, to mind whether they liked my conduct or not; and I inclined more to Guy, every minute. So I stuck my arm into his and led him to a seat by the chapel, and a bird was singing on a maple tree and the shadows of the graceful branches wavered on the grass as we talked.

He told me a good deal in a few straggling, curt sentences, such as boys use when they are moved and bound not to show it. His mother, and he were poor; a naval officer doesn't leave much of a fortune, life insurance is frightfully high with their risks. The uncle was not rich; but he was educating Guy who would try for West Point after he was graduated. Then he would be provided for. His mother was anxious to have him graduate. He had written her about the feeling in school; and she had instantly answered begging him not to risk his future and disappoint his uncle who would surely consider him ungrateful; by any conflict with the authorities. She had besides, a naval officer's notions of the duty of obedience without question; she was shocked at the idea of rebellion. "And it isn't only that," said Guy bracing himself and looking at his shoes; "my mother—my mother has got something the matter with her and—and she can't get well."

"O!" said I; and blushed to my eyes and found no other expression of sympathy for my tongue.

"I've got to do what she wants," said Guy between his teeth, "I've got to."

"Of course," I stammered. I understood, now, why he had so much better marks this year and never went into town on Wednesday afternoons.

"Do you suppose I didn't want to get fired and be free to be going back to her?" he burst out in a suffocated voice, "she don't know I heard the doctors talking; she's keeping it from me and keeping me away from her when she wants—she wants—she's doing it so I shall have a happy time a little longer and not be distracted from my studies; and I—I know what she's set her heart on and I pretend, too." He threw his arm over his convulsed face; I threw my arm about his neck. "Did you—did you know my mother was dead?" I stammered; and my voice broke too. We both of us jumped up and walked until we got ourselves in hand. Well, that was how Guy and I found each other. We have stuck to each other ever since. I remember, that next morning (which was Sunday) I heard Guy sing in chapel. There was a stranger in church; I overheard him whisper to the commandant, "It's wonderful, wonderful." "Yes, rather remarkable voice, isn't it," said the commandant. "A marvellous voice," said the stranger, "but that's not the wonder; that lad can't have *lived*; where did he get that heartbreak in his voice."

Poor Guy, I knew.

Well, I went away, unsuccessful; for the sturdy old Doctor never weakened; and I had to go to Harvard instead of Yale (which, of course was a blessing in disguise!) I wrote to Guy and he to me in the infrequent fashion of boys. One day, I got a paper with the notice of his mother's death. I thought of him all day. When I woke up in the night I thought of him; and I remembered the desolate bewilderment of my own childhood after my mother died. I wrote him a letter and tore it up when I read the first sentence. Finally, I went to see him. I felt like turning back at the dreary little station of his town; the drearier for that winter's smouldering sunset in the faded sky and the snow masking the hills and creaking under the sledge runners. But I climbed into one of the sledges and went to the inn (which was not an encouragement to the sacrifices of friendship) hunted a guide to his uncle's house and found Guy.

I had to fish my will out of my nerves before I could look at him; then, he seemed to me years older; but he grasped both my hands and wrung them. I had seen his mother, you know; he wanted me to come down to them and I did come. When I saw her I understood Guy's feelings. It wasn't so much that she was beautiful, she wasn't that perhaps, only of an amazingly sweet expression and voice and with an exquisite grace of bearing but she had a sympathy, a freshness, an interest in everything that thrilled you in a doomed creature like

her. I never saw anyone so alive. Partly it was her sense of humour, in her a bewitching quality for it played about every subject she touched; and there is nothing so alive as humour. I would laugh and catch myself up in my laugh with a pang. It seemed hideous that so generous and bright and happy a nature should have to suffer and die. Once, she halted in a sentence and I saw Guy's features stiffen; but she finished her story unflinchingly. Afterwards, I knew at what cost, she kept that gay composure. Ah, well, the martyrs are not all down in the church histories. That was why I didn't like to look at Guy; but when I did venture I saw through the haggard wretchedness on his face an unexpected look—I can't describe it; but somehow I was dimly conscious that he had received comfort.

"This is awfully good of you," he said.

"I couldn't help coming," I said.

"I sent a man with a sleigh, I couldn't come myself—but I am sorry he didn't get there in time and you had to take Robson's. I wanted you to come here."

His words sent a queer little crinkle down my nerves. "But how did you know?" I asked. He smiled. "I am not going to have any secrets from you, my mother told me."

I could only stare at him; was his brain touched, —but, then I *had* come.

Guy smiled, again; "No, dear old man, I'm not

a bit crazy. But lest people should think so I haven't told anybody about it; I'm not going to tell, either. Only you. This is it. Nobody can know how much my mother suffered; it was so much that I was glad to have her go. Yet to the end, she wasn't like a sick person; and once she said to me; "Oh, I don't want to die, Guy, not even to see your father; I want to stay with you!" A little while after she fell asleep; and I sat beside her. I think that you know how I felt. Suddenly, her eyes opened; they looked into mine and all the misery I was feeling seemed to be quieted. She said; "I can't stay, Guy; and you'll see me sometimes." And then she went to sleep again. She never recognised anyone, after that although she lived a day longer. And I kept saying that to myself. It steadied me. The night she died I came in where she was and staid with her. I—I did stay with her; for she came for one minute; and it was just—just real! She patted my shoulders and my hair and rumbled it up the way she used; and said, "Guy, I know all about that letter, don't worry; perhaps your voice was given you for something. I talked with your father and he is willing and the other career is closed." You see the man who was to nominate me for West Point had died and the other, his successor has a candidate of his own; and so my chance was gone, there; and I had never told her. I'd never told her either, that a letter had come from a musical man who'd heard me sing at school; and he was willing to take me and

train me on the chance of my voice turning out something. That was all it was, only a minute; but I am just as sure as if I saw her now, sitting by you."

"What a mercy!" I said. I wasn't quite sure he was quite right in his head; but I was sure that his delusion would save his heart from breaking. To lose his mother and his career at the same moment; it was hard lines enough to break a man's heart.

"Yes," he admitted, "I did want to drown myself. But I don't know. I've always had a notion that a man could be an artist, a singer; and be just as much of a man as a soldier. I wanted to be a soldier; I can't; I'll make the best of the other. And—she will help me."

I was so touched I wanted to cry; but I couldn't do that; so I rapped him on the shoulder; and I gave him one of my cigars; and got him off to the inn with me for the night. In short, I braced him up the best I could. I thought a lot of Guy, during the next two years; and saw a lot, too, as he was studying in Boston; but I never referred to his queer psychic experiences, although we very often talked of his mother. I used to wonder about them, however, by myself. The fact is, it was impossible not to see that somehow, that dead woman was controlling and helping Guy. I don't suppose he could see her or think he could see her, once a month, perhaps not once in six months; but he believed in

her continual presence. The belief was not only his great comfort; it was his tremendous support. After he began to sing, he had plenty of temptations, a splendid athletic fellow like him with the voice of an angel; but I know that he lived as clean a life as a girl's. It's Guy's story not mine I'm telling but he was a good friend to me and to some other fellows of the old school. At first he wouldn't come over to Cambridge; he turned rusty at the mention of it. "If I could have gone to West Point and shown them I wasn't a sissy boy," said he, "it would have been different; now, it's no use. Let them think what they like of me!" Really, however, they had come round to my point of view; and I got them over to see Guy since he wouldn't come to see them; after which he did come; and we had good times. Then, he went to Europe; he came back; he began to sing, in church, at first. Afterwards he got his chance and was to sing in grand opera. Somebody had given out; and Guy was to have the part. It all came in a moment. He told me it was coming, excited as I had never seen him. How did he know? I know what he would have said: "I don't know any explanation." I remember the day before he was to appear; he took a walk with me. I had come to New York to see him and he went down to Manhattan beach to tell me about things. He was in the highest spirits. He told me how he had struggled; how he had insisted in singing in concerts and for churches; how under an assumed name

he had gone into Vaudeville, even, until he had paid back his patron; and paid his uncle for his school expenses. "I made the last payment, yesterday," he cried, "I am a free man, now; and I can be what I want. I know I shall succeed, to-morrow. It is in me, listen!" He flung out his arms and sang to the birds and the waves, sang more like a lark than a man, until I thought of Shelley's ode. It was pure joy without a cadence of mortal sorrow. "That's finer than pathos," he cried, "that's pure tone. I could never do that before. I seem never to have known happiness; I know it now, I know it, now!"

"And she is an angel," said I, dryly.

He smiled as he nodded; "Yes, she is. How did you know?"

"I didn't know; only generally when a man goes daft in that fashion there is some woman behind it all. Might I make bold to ask if—well, is there anything definite?"

He actually blushed; for a man of the world and an artist he was amazingly like a bashful child. "I have only barely seen her and talked to her a little; I know she does not dream of my presumption; and yet I know she feels a little of the attraction that I felt the first moment I saw her; I am sure she does; only she is so great a lady she couldn't consider a poor singer; a great singer—don't you know that makes all the difference! and she will be in her box to-morrow and hear me!"

"Guy," I said impulsively, "I don't know who

she is, I don't care what she has, I do know that she has reason to be proud of your love."

"That shows what a good friend you are; if only I could see mother and find out what she thinks, you two are the only ones I want to tell."

"Haven't you seen your mother lately?" I asked; I always talked to him in that matter of fact fashion; it was impossible to argue with him about what was as absolute a reality as the stars to him.

"Not for months," he answered; "but I have the feeling that I shall, soon; it is incomplete without her. She knows."

He began to sing again; and again I thought of Shelley's lark; but this time it was not the "profuse strains of unpremeditated art" which Guy's singing suggested; I was repeating under my breath;

"We look before and after, we sigh for what is not,
Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell
Of saddest thought!"

I only half knew the German words yet my heart beat thickly with Siegfried's longing. Away out to sea, a boat was scudding, tripping under a heavy sail; it came nearer and nearer. The men in the boat were listening; one of them waved his cap.

I turned on Guy with a jest on my tongue that was never spoken. He stopped singing; his face changed; at first there was joy, then a kind of fright. "What do you mean, mother dear?" he said,

“what can happen? How shall I be disappointed? Not—not to-morrow?”

It is impossible for me to describe the strange anxiety with which I listened to this queer, invisible telephone; or how, instinctively, I fell into his own attitude of expectation. All the light and hope was dashed out of his face. He stood, gloomily clenching his hands and frowning out at sea.

Of a sudden his sombre eyes flashed. “Look at the boat!” he cried.

I perceived that the boat which I had noticed was tacking in a way to send chills down a sailor’s spine.

“The fools!” cried Guy, “Oh, the cursed fools! They’ll be over in a minute!”

Involuntarily, I ran my eye over the beach for a boat that I had noticed only a minute before, which a boy had been paddling about. “Bring that boat in!” I shouted.

“Maybe that will do it, maybe,” Guy muttered; his face was drawn and tense. He looked as I had seen him once in a losing game of football at school when he made that rush that almost saved it. We both ran to the beach; before we got to the surf, the catboat was over on its side and we could see the men trying to scramble up on her.

Guy sent his wonderful voice out to them; “Hold on! Keep your heads! We’re coming!” He pounded down after me, snatching the boat out of the boy’s hands, tumbling in with a frantic haste.

"You row," he cried, "I'll fish the crazy brutes out of the water."

Silently I obeyed him; I rowed better than he, having been on the 'varsity scrub crew; and I bent to the oars while he directed me. There was a furious eagerness in his manner which I had never seen there, generally he was very gentle; it caught me up in its whirl as if I had been a chip in a gale. The spray matted his black hair on his forehead, his eyes scintillated like flames. And all the while (a very strange sight to me in one so controlled and quiet) he was swearing under his breath at the drowning men. As for them, they were as idiotic and frightened as men ever are; I daresay they were half drunk. The boat had shipped a quantity of water before tipping and they hadn't sense to roll her over and climb up on her; and she was sinking every minute; they would all be in the water before we could reach them. Guy could see the whole drama; I only got it from a single swift glance over my shoulders and his exclamations which were like groans.

"They are bobbing like corks, d—— 'em! Water like ice in November. There's one off—no, he's back; hear them praying and swearing at the same time! D—— you! you don't deserve to be saved! The world's better off without such brutes! And to give up—For such curs! *Hold on! I tell you!*"

We were on her just as they let loose and the boat with a horrible sucking gasp, like a live monster

dipped and sank! I don't know quite how we did it. Guy jumped overboard and brought them one by one, somehow, to the boat and we got them over the stern and into the bottom where they lay floundering like fish, the three; and we covered them with our wet coats; and rowed them to shore more dead than alive. Guy had stopped swearing; but he cast a deadly sort of glance at the sodden, whimpering creatures. I couldn't understand his rancour. They were a low lot to be sure; and drunk into the bargain; but I didn't see why he was so enraged at them. Nevertheless, he helped get them into a cart and got them to shelter and fire. The day had turned bitter cold for us in our soaked garments; but Guy poured hot coffee down the shipwrecked men's throats before he took any himself. While he was drinking he began to cough. Then, for the first time, it struck me what this life-saving business might mean to him.

"You come along with me," I said sternly; "they'll do all right; you've got to get some quinine and whiskey in you!"

"If I can get it," said he, "it's no use, old man, I'm in for bronchitis and my voice will go. I knew it when I jumped into the water. She told me not to hesitate; I hoped, I think she hoped too, we could get them off without getting into the water."

"Oh, why didn't you let me jump?" I cried.

"Because you can't swim anything like as well as I; we couldn't have saved but two of them then!

Come, let's get out of this and make a fight against bronchitis, anyhow; here's some money to leave for them. They've lost their coats. Oh, well, I dare say they want to live. Maybe, there's some woman will sleep better to-night for having the worthless dogs alive!"

So I took him away. We did our best; but there was delay; he was thoroughly chilled; perhaps there was a little weakness back of it all; anyhow, he had bronchitis and he did lose his voice. It was pretty awful."

The story teller was silent, twisting his moustache. Presently he smiled.

"That isn't the end of the story?" said Mrs. Hexamer.

"No, not entirely. It was a knock out blow of fate you might say; but Guy was not that kind of a fellow. The day after the doctor's verdict, I found him sitting up in his chair, reading the newspapers about the Spanish war.

He greeted me as cheerfully as he had before the bad quarter of an hour he had had.

"What's up, now?" said I, almost inclined to be peevish with such frivolity.

His smile faded; but he kept his head in the air. "I saw my mother last night," said he.

"Is your voice going to come back?" said I; I was almost as much a believer as he at times, you see.

He shook his head. "No, I'm going back to my

old trade," said he, "I'm going to enlist. Who knows, maybe I'll have a chance to do something."

"By Jove," I cried, "girls like heroes more than great singers. Go in and win, Guy, I'll go with you."

"And you did go," interrupted Miss Callender; "and did he win?"

"He got a lieutenancy and the typhoid fever; and I brought him home."

"Did he see his mother? Did she come to him, again?" asked Mrs. Hexamer.

Once. I heard him talking to her. Oh, of course it might be ravings but she did tell him he wouldn't die and he didn't die. And in the talk he let out the girl's name. When I got home, I went straight to her and told her the story; I didn't tell her that I believed his mother and not the doctors who said he would die. I told her about the doctors. She listened to it all; she was a girl I knew and had known all my life; yet to save my soul I couldn't tell how it affected her. But she rose up and said, "If I go with you, will they let me see him?"

"I'll undertake that," said I.

"If they don't," said she, "will you tell him I never did like singers; I hated to have him a singer; and—and I think he was *noble* to do as he did!"

Well, she went with me; she did see him; nevertheless I gave him her message. He had always maintained that his mother knew and was glad of the return to his original career; I don't know; I

do know that such communion with the departed as Guy believes is his, has transfigured his life. If it was a dream, it was a dream from which I hope he will never wake!"

"Look here," protested a hardened bachelor, "do you mean to say that any woman was fool enough to marry a fellow like that, a man whose shadow—one can't say 'went back of him', for that's what it ought to do—well, a second Peter Schlemil—a man with a spook mother, and who, in the words of Eugene Field, 'kept seein' things at night.' It seems to me he was outside the domestic paling—that is, the barbed wire fence—of matrimony. Lord! Think of a mother-in-law who couldn't be kept away by locks and bolts, and whom you couldn't shy something at in moments of need."

"Don't you think there are supernatural things, Mr. Glover?" asked a woman.

"Yes, I do. They used to call idiots, naturals, and some modern ones are such big specimens that they are plainly supernatural," snapped the old man, who in truth was bored, and was wondering when the whiskey and water would arrive. "That's the only supernatural I believe in."

"Come, Katie, we must convert Mr. Glover, and on the spot. Tell us the story of THE GREEN BOWL," begged Mrs. Goddard, "as you told it to me."

Katie looked up, and smiled as if with ready assent. "I am proud to be called upon," she said

gaily, " but it will not be a story, but a plain record of experience. After the manner of the Arabian Nights, you shall now listen to my tale of the little green bowl and a night in the meeting-house.

THE GREEN BOWL

“I AM a person who has always cherished a prejudice against crossing the sea, and I have made up for it handsomely by taking many journeys on land here at home. Some of the dearest of these have also been the shortest. I have had an unbroken custom these many years, of going away for a week’s driving up the country in late September or early October, and just before I came here I had an adventure for the first time. And that little green bowl on the table there is to me a dear and valued memento of it.”

“Do you mean that you go through the country quite, quite alone,” asked Mrs. Crosdyck, a majestic-looking elderly lady, with some reproach in her voice.

“A coachman and a footman would spoil my joys altogether,” acknowledged Miss Montague with decision. “There is only one way to do it; one must have a good companion and an excellent horse, a light buggy, and almost no baggage at all. One must wear a shirt-waist and a corduroy skirt and jacket, she must have a dressing kit of the most frugal sort, no silver boxes or dressing-table tools or any tea gowns allowed! One may provide a very little good tea for emergencies, and a small box of biscuit, and a nubbin of chocolate or some decent raisins. Yes, and one needs a good golf cape in case

of rain," the traveller insisted eagerly, as if the serious duty of selection had suddenly arrived. "But the most important things are the horse and companion!"

"And then, my dear child," asked the disapproving lady, "do you mean to say that you really go driving off to strange places, quite, quite alone? Have you no fear of tramps?"

"None whatever," answered the story-teller with a fire of enthusiasm for which the guests were unprepared. "I might be the only living descendant of Robin Hood himself: besides, I don't go alone; Miss Kent always almost goes with me. My only sorrow is that I can't go gypsying afoot and be a tramp myself. Should you really like to know about our last year's excursion?"

"You would hardly think, to look at my companion now, that she was fit for adventuring," resumed the speaker after a warm response. "You see Miss Frances Kent sitting there, gowned in white, with rare old pink topaz ornaments? (I speak as the society newspaper.) I now show you the celebrated Miss Frances Kent, ladies and gentlemen, known as the best of companions for such a journey. She is ever thankful for 'the key of the fields' like myself, and we are going again this year, gowned in well-worn corduroy, and with happy hearts, to see what else we can of the world. The only thing that troubles us is that we have to take so many clumsy things for the horse, and they make

the buggy quite uncomfortable, but we mind nothing when we are really out upon the road."

"Where do you go?" asked an awestricken voice.

"Oh anywhere;" replied Miss Montague with the utmost cheerfulness. "Sometimes northeast and sometimes northwest, as the case may be. The country taverns are much better since the days of bicycling came in. We start off boldly and just say that we are going up the country and then let fate or fortune choose the way. Last year we had been to see an old village, high on the shoulders of the mountains, which I had always wished to visit. We were on our way home, as safe as dolls in a nursery when we had our little adventure and got the green bowl."

The audience politely waited for the story.

"Rain is a great enemy to the primitive traveller and to lose one's way is exciting, but not really dangerous," the speaker explained, "We also wish that there was a useful society for the maintenance of sign-boards. We were hurrying toward home that day, and lost our way because we could find no sign-boards at all, though we poked about with a stick in the raspberry bushes at the fork of the roads and thought we had found what was left of the sign-post, and then were obliged to let the horse himself select the way home, and he struck into a road that carried us many miles through the woods. Instead of leading us the way we expected, this road

at last seemed to take a turn back toward the hills again. The bushes grew closer against the wheels, and after we had passed some rough wood-roads by which timber had been hauled out in the winter, the signs of travel were so slight that we feared that we were for the first time likely to spend a night in an impromptu camp. I confess that it was a little too late in the season for that, and it was so near the end of the day that we were sorry to think of going all the way back. Frances, there, began to be timid and even reproachful, she had insisted from the first that we should have taken the other road, and was pleased to blame me when our mistake was all the fault of the horse."

"You haven't said that it was already growing dark and that the clouds were of a threatening hue," broke in Miss Kent. "It looked like a black rainy night; I expected every minute that we should come to a deserted clearing or a ruined logging camp; for at last the road itself seemed hard to find, there were bushes in it by that time as well as alongside and your ignorant horse stopped still in his tracks!"

"Yes, and then we heard a cock crowing," Miss Montague interrupted her scornfully, "and we went on again directly; we should have been all right if it hadn't been for the rain. I like that horse myself and I think that I shall take him again this year. Then we hurried on toward the farm which could be not far away. The voice of poultry usually means not only a hen-coop but a barn and a house, and we

began to laugh at each other and I whipped the horse because it was just beginning to rain. It was not long before we were out of the woods but there was no hen-coop to be seen, much less a house or barn. There was indeed a piece of open country but it was all pasture land, and we thought that the cock's crow was only a ghost of a bird and sat and looked at each other. Beyond the empty pastures the road plunged into the woods again."

"And then you said, 'This is what we have always wanted, Frances; this is really an adventure!'" said Miss Kent laughing, but one of the elder ladies gave a groan of dismay.

"It was raining fast and the light was fast going. I began to wonder if there was anything better to do than to drive under a thick pine tree and pull out the rubber lap-robe and put it over our knees and sit still all night in the buggy," continued the narrator, making the most of the situation. "But we really had heard the encouraging rooster; I suppose now that some track led through that pasture to a farmhouse hidden behind the woods. The horse knew more than we did, perhaps he heard some sounds of life that we couldn't hear, for he began to trot along cheerfully as fast as he could go and pretty soon we had passed through those black hemlock woods that lay beyond the pastures and came out to the open world where we saw a funny little church steeple not far away.

"Now, the very morning before this, we had

passed another church and I had told Frances, when I saw the long row of open sheds where the horses were left during service time, that ever since I could remember I had thought what fun it would be to drive under such a shelter and keep oneself dry and safe if a shower came up, and that never yet had the shower and the sheds and I all been in the same place at the same time. That was enough to say, the interfering fates had listened to me; my opportunity had arrived; and I fairly whirled in out of the steady rain, thankful enough to get under cover."

"Isn't it the strangest thing in the world!" interrupted Mrs. Crosdyck with enthusiasm, "if you say that you haven't had a headache for a year, you simply do remind the fates to send you one; the careful Germans knock under the table to drive such evil spirits away, but we take no proper precautions here in America, we really are too self-sufficient!"

The hostess looked relieved and even triumphant.

"Go on my dear Katie!" Mrs. Goddard urged the traveller with a contented smile.

"Oh yes, the fates had not only taken heed of me, but they seemed to have provided rain and sheds enough to make up for all lacks of either in my whole history," said Miss Montague. "The only trouble was that there was so little of me. It must have been a large parish, though one could see no houses the line of sheds looked as long as a cavalry barrack, and the rain was a drowning rain. Frances was now more sulky than can be described, though

she had been complaining through the whole week's drive of too much dust, and I looked across the road at the church spire and the vane pointed northeast in the most determined fashion, by this time it was quite half-past five o'clock. We had passed one little dark low-storied house that looked quite deserted, but I had seen no barn beside it, it was no use to go back, we should be wet through. We sat there in the buggy and looked at each other in despair. You were very decent in your behaviour Frances! though very glum indeed!" she exclaimed, at which tribute of respect the company laughed aloud.

"What *did* you do?" demanded Mrs. Crosdyck. "What an awful situation for two young ladies!"

"And a hungry horse!" added a merciful masculine with an amused smile. "I should have advised driving as fast as you could through the rain until you found shelter, there must have been good farm-houses not far beyond."

Miss Montague laughed a little. "If you had only seen how it poured and how dark it was growing!" she answered modestly, "and we might have gone a mile or even two, and Frances here was already wet and shivering. 'Get out my dear!' said I affectionately 'and jump up and down a little to warm you, I'll run across to the church!' and I did not wait for argument but caught up my skirts and ran. I was ready to pound in the door by the time I got to it, but it quietly opened as if it had heard

good preaching, and knew its duty; and in the entry I saw that there was a nice pile of pine wood, and I even observed in my extremity, a tin match-box on the ledge of the rough wainscotting. All I wanted was the stove, and that was just beyond, at the back of the pews. I hadn't consciously thought about the cold while we were driving, but I now knew that I was shivering myself. So I just stopped and made a fire in that good old box-stove, then and there. I may have used a few leaves of a tattered hymn-book for kindling, I really can't say, and the smoke puffed out at me so that I thought I should be forever blind, but in two minutes I had a good fire going."

There was a murmur of admiration from the audience.

"Then I ran across the road again, meaning to send Frances over to the church to get dry and warm while I drove on alone to find a good place where we could be housed for the night; you must know that Frances had been ill the winter before, and her lungs were still considered to be delicate. I was going to run no risks; but when I got back she was fairly beaming with joy, I could see her eyes shine though it was almost dark under the sheds. 'Look here,' said she, 'here's a fine pile of hay in the next cubby but one! I suppose some farmer has a horse that won't stand quietly without refreshments, or some one may have been at work about the church and brought it.' 'Don't let's search for reasons,' said I; the dear child had already brought an armful

of hay, though I had always thought she knew nothing about horses, and had even let the check rein down, and old Bob was munching away as comfortably as possible. So I told Frances about the fire in the church and sent her across to sit beside it, and made up my mind to stay all night just where we were. I unharnessed old Bob and put on his blanket and halter, and led him through to the stall where the hay was, and pulled the buggy farther in out of the wet, and spread out the rug we had had over us and put all our things into it, and then I splashed over again to the little church. You certainly never heard such a rain, it drummed louder than ever on the roof, and I was as wet as I could be."

"We thought it must be the equinoctial storm," said Miss Frances Kent laughing a little. "Your poor hat, Katie! It had been trimmed with nice ostrich feathers, and when I saw you coming in at the door with your great load, and those feathers dripping into your eyes, you were truly a most forlorn object."

"Of what importance were our looks!" demanded Miss Montague with royal scorn. "You may not believe it, any of you who are listening to me, but we had a most charming evening together, Frances and I, after we got dry. The church was not cold, it had been sunshiny weather, rather hot for the season, all that week, and the pine-wood fire soon made us only too warm. We had a little of our luncheon left and we ate it thankfully, with the aforesaid nubbin of

chocolate for dessert. Of course there were plenty of kerosene lamps in the meeting-house, and we lighted two or three of them and made our corner quite gay. There was a little organ in the singing seats that wasn't half bad; a very nice tone it had; and Frances played upon it (contented, sober things), that she remembered, and sang a good deal, dear girl, and made it very pleasant for me, though I don't know much about music; then we got sleepy and looked about for two pews with good cushions. It was a nice old church with decent wide pews that made us very comfortable. We just locked the church door to keep out burglars, and laid ourselves down in our two pews and went to sleep!"

"It was a great bit of fun," insisted Miss Kent, protesting a little at the mingled amusement and horror of the company. "We really had a delightful evening, but you must tell them now about our breakfast, Katie dear."

"I was just waking up in wonder," said the story-teller. "I did really feel a little stiff and lame that next morning, but it was not an equinoctial rain at all; the sunshine was pouring in through the big windows, and I always did like to sleep in a bright room. It was half-past five by the church clock; old Bob was whinnying and there was somebody knocking very loud at the meeting-house door. I was not startled, but I was half provoked, because whoever it was kept up such an incessant knocking and calling. I got there as quick as I could, but Frances

was still sound asleep, like a stupid baby, in her pew. I opened the door and there stood the most dear kind-looking old woman that you ever saw, with a face of such anxiety that I couldn't help laughing as I looked at her."

" 'You poor dear young creatur's!' she said, 'be you alive this morning? I see you drive by in that drowning rain, and I run out and called after you to come in, but I couldn't make you hear. I expected you'd go right on to Duffy's folks, but 'tis a mile an' a quarter further, and then I watched an' I didn't see ye pass up the hill right out beyond here, and so I knowed you'd been discreet and drove into the sheds. It was pourin' so I couldn't do nothin'; my health ain't sufficient to risk a wetting, but I did feel anxious, and 'twant half an hour afore I see you'd got safe into the meetin'-house, an' lit the lamps, an' I set down then an' felt easy, an' says to myself the Lord will provide; they looked like very competent girls an' they can easy make 'em a nice fire. I'd been over early in the morning, a-sweeping out the pews, an' 'twas I that had left the door unlocked, meanin' to go back if it hadn't come on to rain so. I keep the keys; they call me the deacon, some on 'em in the parish! Now I want you to come right along home with me; I laid awake in the night considerable and I see when you put the lights out nice an' careful, an' I says; now what I can do for them strangers is to give 'em a nice hot breakfast!'

"Frances had got herself well waked up and put

together by that time, and came out with her most cordial manners, and we all three helped to put the church to rights. Mrs. Patton looked anxiously about to see if we had done any mischief, but we hadn't, and she found the church broom, and swept neatly about the stove for us as I had meant to do myself. We put some money into the contribution box, and then we went off up the road with the good little old soul. It was a perfectly enchanting morning, old Bob was still munching away at his pile of hay, and he called after us most sociably. Mrs. Patton said that we could bring him a pail of water when we came back from breakfast."

"Well, and how did you fare, my dear?" asked Mrs. Crosdyck again, a little incredulous.

"It was the very best breakfast we had ever eaten in our lives, you know that we hadn't in the least over-eaten at supper," said Miss Kent, eagerly taking up the thread of discourse. "By this time it was only six o'clock, but Mrs. Patton had made everything ready that she could before she came over. We ate and ate, and we laughed and laughed, the dear little old woman was so droll and her house was one of those warm little brown country houses that are full of welcome and homely comfort. I believe there wasn't a bit of paint in it except on her pretty green kitchen chairs. She had some good old pictures on the wall too, prints of Bible subjects mostly, and a splendid, coloured one of the Pirate's Bride. Her garden was full of phlox and tiger-lilies

then, but it had been a lovely garden all the season; she said that she always put the Sunday flowers on the pulpit desk in summer. As for the green bowl, it was standing on a side-table between the windows in the kitchen, with three yellow apples in it, and I said what a beauty it was, and Katie praised it too, you can see it for yourselves!"

Miss Montague had stopped suddenly in mid-course. She had been gayly recounting this simple adventure of a rainy day, but almost with the first entrance of a figure with so wet a rustic landscape, her manner had entirely changed.

"One always knows when one sees a real friend for the first time," she said gravely. "Frances and I took Mrs. Patton to our lonely hearts at that first moment."

"You ought to call this 'The Tale of a Lonely Parish,'" only Mr. Marion Crawford thought of the title first, laughed Mrs. Goddard. "I can imagine your two faces in the doorway; I am sure that you looked apprehensive, both of you, and tired and hungry too!"

"I shall never forget how Mrs. Patton trotted ahead of us down the road towards her house," laughed Miss Kent. "She was talking as fast as she could over her shoulder all the way, and her cat had come with her and kept close by her skirts. The horse was whinnying after us like a whole circus, poor old Bob feared that he might be forgotten, and altogether we made a great excitement."

"I should have rung the church bell for help," announced Mrs. Crosdyck, with an air of being the only resourceful member of the company.

"There wasn't any bell," retorted the girl, and nobody who listens to me need think that we were frightened for one moment. I should like to know what there was to frighten one in such a peaceful, honest, little corner of the world as that."

"And then you saw the bowl," Mrs. Crosdyck suggested impatiently.

"Yes, all the time we were at the table I kept stealing glances at the green bowl. It was on the other table between the front windows. It was behind Frances and so she couldn't see it as well as I."

"I had seen it," answered Miss Kent, "and I knew very well what you were looking at."

"It is not an unusual thing to see so good a piece of china in a little house like that," explained Mrs. Goddard. "Nearly all the best things in my collection have come out of just such houses. There was a time when they were not much valued, but twenty years have made an entire change. After those of us who began to make collections, came a deluge of mercenary collectors, who canvassed the neighbourhood of all the old seaport towns. There is little to be found now, but the former owners of old china, and French and English pottery, have become well educated in the real values of old plates and bowls, that they once gladly sold for a quarter of a dollar."

"Mrs. Patton was begging us to eat more of

everything on her dear little square table," Miss Montague went on. "Somebody asked me if we had pie a few minutes ago, and I would not answer him because the question was not asked in the right spirit, but I now say that we did have an apple pie such as I have never eaten before or since. It made a sort of dessert to our breakfast, instead of berries or any other stewed fruit. For my own part," and she challenged the whole company with great spirit, "I never had any sympathy with those who can accept an inelegant, dull English tart without protest, and then smile at a New England pie. They do not see that the pie is a highly developed English tart made fit for Christian food and attractive to the epicure. Imagination has worked upon it, the higher education of women has spiritualised its grosser form. The English tart is nothing but a pie without a soul. If I described the creation that we ate for breakfast at Mrs. Patton's!—"

"Oh, but we aren't as hungry as you were then!" cried someone. The listeners were in the best of humour now, especially Mrs. Crosdyck, but she proved to have at least one wish still unsatisfied.

"Your travels are very interesting, my dear," she said loftily, "but I should like to hear a real story. I am really curious about that green bowl."

"So were we!" agreed Katie pleasantly. "Presently, when there was a pause, I asked a question: you see that we first had to tell all about ourselves, and hear all about each other, and give proper time

to the preliminaries of so true a friendship; then I frankly asked Mrs. Patton where she got that beautiful little green bowl."

"She laughed aloud in the oddest way before she answered me. 'Funny how everybody that comes to this house asks me that question!' she said. 'Won't you have just one more piece of pie, dears?' and then she laughed again!

"There's two of them little green bowls! My great aunt gave them to me. She said she must have owned 'em full fifty years; they were given to her just after she was married, by a brother of her husband's that was a sailor, a wild sort of fellow that fetched 'em home from China. They look as if they were plain green from here, but when you hold 'em in the light you see a pattern underneath.

"'Twan't the aunt that brought me up; 'twas still another. I was left an orphan when I was a baby, and I'd every reason to be a lonesome person, but 'twan't my nature."

"That's just the way she talked—oh Katie, you've got it exactly!" interrupted Frances Kent, with delight.

"No dears, 'twas my other aunt," Miss Montague went on reporting, as if she had not been interrupted at all. "My Aunt Mally, that was the doctor's wife's mother over to Jopham Corners. They went off down to Meriden where he thought he saw a great opening for practice, but aunt said she was too old to change, I don't know but

they were glad; 'twas her own house at the Corners and there were times when she made 'em feel it. One o' them two green bowls was always on the mantlepiece in her own room, and folks were always proposing that she should put it on the parlour mantlepiece where 'twould show, but she never consented. She had that bowl and a little Samuel, and a bunch of feather flowers under a bell-glass, between them. When I was a little girl and went to see her, she used to take a cent out of one of them bowls and give it to me, real pleasant, and when I was grown up she used to offer me a hoarhound drop. Aunt and me was always good friends!'" and Katie and Mrs. Goddard were seen by all the company to smile at each other.

"I asked Mrs. Patton if her aunt had been dead a good while, and she said it was forty years."

Said Frances Kent, "Somehow one feels as if so few things had ever happened and as if everything were so tremendously interesting."

"I began to have a strange feeling about the little green bowl myself," acknowledged Katie, speaking in a low voice. "You see that when we had got up from the table I noticed that Mrs. Patton kept looking at it as if it was somehow in her mind. We helped her clear away the breakfast things, and when we had been in the house an hour one felt as if it had been a week. After awhile she took me by the sleeve when Frances was putting away some plates in the cupboard (somehow one always knew just

where everything went), and she whispered to me, 'I expect there's some sort of charm about that bowl!'

"I wasn't going to have dear Frances left out of any pleasure!" said the speaker, and I called to her at once and asked her. 'Did you hear what Mrs. Patton says? There is a charm about the green bowl!' But Mrs. Patton looked a little disturbed.

"I can't tell it to but one, dear," she said, and her cheeks grew quite scarlet. "Aunt never told it to anybody but me:" Oh I assure you it was quite exciting!

"I knew there must be a story!" said Mrs. Crosbydyck complacently, and she smoothed down her satin dress as if she wore an invisible apron.

"Somehow the whole thing was mysterious," said Frances Kent, slowly. "First we lost the road and then we heard the rooster crowing and could see no house, and then we spent the night in the church, and this strange little old woman came to the door in the morning, and we seemed to know all about each other before we had been together for five minutes, and now we had had that wonderful breakfast, and it was all exactly as if the green bowl had something to do with it; we were all thinking of it from the first minute we had entered her door! I was ready to burst with curiosity, and I said: Oh do tell us! But she grew still more scarlet and confused and caught up a water pail from its little bench, and ran away to the well to fill it.

"Did you say there were two bowls?" asked Mrs. Goddard, smiling a little in spite of herself.

"We never saw but one," answered Katie. "Now don't interrupt me any more, Frances, if you please! You know that——"

"I don't know anything," retorted Miss Kent, with some spirit. "I begin to believe that I never shall! I have always insisted that you might tell me what Mrs. Patton told you!"

All this time the green bowl stood in plain sight. There was a handful of pansies in it which did not hide its lovely outlines or its deep rich colour. All the members of the house party were looking at the strange old piece of eastern ware with constantly increasing curiosity. The fire had sprung afresh on the hearth and a reflection of it twirled and glowed on the bowl. Everybody's attention was centered upon this thing of which hardly any one had been in the least conscious an hour before. It had taken on a strange importance.

"You see it was the one really valuable and beautiful thing in that little house. It shone like a jewel on its table between the windows in the sun that morning," Katie went on. "You can't help wondering about the past experiences of a thing like that," and she looked at the bowl with a sort of apprehensive interest. "The Sailor and the old aunt and Mrs. Patton make but a short chapter of its long history; it is a very old bowl indeed!"

"But the charm?" asked some one eagerly.

"Did Mrs. Patton tell you the secret? Were there really two bowls—and one held a curse and the other a blessing?"

"They were for the cents and the hoarhound drops?" suggested an eager listener. But the young narrators looked at each other with odd intentness across the room and did not laugh at all.

"We had to wait there for a while," Miss Montague went on. "Mrs. Patton had been watching all breakfast time for a messenger and finally saw a boy from the nearest house, the one behind the woods where we had heard the cock crow, and sent him for old Bob with orders for plenty of oats and water and to rub him down and keep him until called for. This was at about half-past eight so that Bob was not really suffering. We kept thinking that he would come, but it proved later that the wheels had wanted oiling and that the good woman had dried our blankets and everything. Mrs. Patton looked more and more cheerful and said that she wished that we had no choice but to spend the day with her and our loss of time was her gain. We said that she must let us help her if we stayed, and what was she going to do if we had not been there? Finally she confessed that she had some beans that she was in a hurry to pick over for market, and send off, that day or the next, whenever they were called for, and we sat down together as if we had always been work-mates."

"Wasn't it the cosiest thing you ever did? I am

always thinking of it when things are tiresome," exclaimed Miss Kent.

"Picking beans, how odd!" said a scornful voice, but nobody seconded the scoffer, while Mrs. Crosdyck asked with great interest if there were a cat.

"Oh, yes, two enchanting kittens!" cried the teller with enthusiasm. "But now I must really tell you about the bowl! Only as Frances says there is a secret."

She got up from her chair and went and stood by the table and lifted the beautiful old thing in her hand so that all the company could see it.

"It looks too distinguished to have wasted its beauty in such a house as that," said Mrs. Crosdyck who was nearest. "Look out, my dear, that you don't break it."

"Mrs. Patton said that her old aunt used to have the gift of telling fortunes," said Miss Montague solemnly as she still stood there looking very eager and handsome. "And we asked if she couldn't tell fortunes, too, as we sat round the bushel-basket of beans. She seemed a little confused, and then told us that she didn't know why she shouldn't admit it, the gift had brought her more pain than pleasure, but anybody might use the good of any gift, and she had warned some folks of what was coming so that they had been thankful to her afterward. "And keeping my mind on that," she said impressively, "has made me learn to read folks' faces easier than most people can. One of our ministers went so far

as to say 'twas a gift that would lead me and other folks straight to the pit if I continued its exercise, but I made bold to say it had heretofore seemed to lead the other way if I wasn't mistaken.' She reached forward then and rolled out the three yellow apples, and took the green bowl and looked at it and into it as I have seen other people looking into crystals, the dear old thing was quite lost in it and I saw her eyelids quiver strangely once or twice. Frances and I stopped clicking the beans and watched her. 'One o' you's been in danger lately, she whispered, and the other's been living in the shadows. Yes, I can read it plain!' You who know us both will know that she spoke the truth. 'And you're going from here to a house near a river, and there'll be lots of folks there,' so she went on and told us nothing that was important, but everything she said was true. Then she told me about my uncle's death in a southern country where the sun was too bright, and that his head would suffer, and that I would have much more money, but wish for the one who had loved me back again and count myself poor without him instead of rich: there were enough remarkable things to make one respect Mrs. Patton as a seer, but she sat there quite simply and used her plain country words while she revealed us, to ourselves and to each other. Then suddenly she gave herself a queer little shake and seemed to wake up into the commonplace world again. You see that there wasn't anything startling about it that

she could tell, but we saw plainly that she had the gift."

"Oh, I wish that we had her here!" said one of the listeners, "she would tell all our fortunes!"

"But Miss Montague has been given the power to tell fortunes; didn't you tell us so?" urged another.

"Not on Sunday, my dear," commanded Mrs. Goddard impressively. "No, I should never consent to it!"

"I can only tell you about the two bowls, that is really the most interesting thing of all," said Katie blushing, and looking a little confused. "It seems that the two bowls, the 'sister bowls' she called them, must be kept by two different persons, and the other, which she had kept for many years was put away in the closet, only the day before this one had come back to her from the other owner who had just died. And when she saw me standing in the meetinghouse door that morning she said that she knew; she had a certain sign that made it plain to her that she must give this other green bowl to me. She stood them together on the table and they looked just alike. We asked her how she understood about them, and she said that her old aunt taught her and she would teach me; the sailor who brought them home to her had been a roving man and had gone into some far province of China, and got his strange learning there. He had meant to settle down and be a fortune-teller, and expected to make a great deal of money, but after he had told the aunt about the

bowls and made her his companion in their mysteries, he went away, only for a day's journey, and was killed by an accident. Now I am Mrs. Patton's '*companion*,' as she calls it; she said that if there were not two of us *companions* the life of the bowls would soon be gone. She said one very strange thing,—the friend who had kept it for her had been dead two days but she said she could have waited another day if I had not appeared, that as long as the other "*companion's*" soul was in her body or near it, there was no danger. But she was glad when she saw me and got the sign. She said that our souls always stayed with our bodies a little while after we die."

"How very strange," said Frances Kent. "But somehow she did not seem half so strange to me at the time when we were there. I sat picking over the beans, not at all excited, even when Mrs. Patton took Katie into the little bedroom and shut the door, and divulged the principles of magic. You certainly did look a little pale when you came out, Katie!"

"Can you see things in it, in the bowl, I mean?" one of the guests asked hurriedly. "Do you try very often, Miss Montague. Oh, please throw out those pansies and tell us something!"

"Aren't you afraid that it will be broken?" some careful soul inquired.

"No, it is the most wonderful thing, like some precious stone or dull crystal—I don't think it is any sort of pottery," said its owner. "It

made me a little fidgety to see it in my room and I brought it here. You see that there isn't any story at all. I only promised to give you a plain account of our travels," she added hastily, for every one began to ask questions.

"I don't like this revelation very much," protested Mrs. Goddard. "Katie, my dear, you never told me so much before. I have been enchanted at having such an exquisite thing in the house, but I begin to be a little afraid of the green bowl."

"Mrs. Patton said that it was like any other bowl except for those who could master it. She was very matter of fact, after all," said Frances Kent. "There we sat together nearly all that long morning, and grew to be the best of friends. I tried to make her talk about the bowl to me, but she put on such a droll look and said that I was of the joking sort like herself and perhaps she could find some sort of charm that would be fit for me before we came again. We were quite at home together, I assure you. She did not talk much with Katie after they had their secret session. I asked her all about her housekeeping."

Miss Kent was glancing at her friend as she spoke who was standing by the table with the bowl in her hand looking into it as if she had forgotten everything else.

"What is it, dear?" whispered Frances Kent, as she rose and stood beside her.

"I just saw something very strange like a living

picture!" answered the holder of the bowl softly. She was turning it to the light and gazing at it with a half-frightened look on her face. "It is just as Mrs. Patton said: she told me that some day I should find that the gift had come."

"Tell me what it is that you see," persisted her friend.

"Oh, don't ask me out loud, don't say anything now!" begged Katie, "I saw two of the people who are sitting here, they were saying farewell to each other like the figures on a Greek vase; one of them is going to die. I knew them at once, Frances! I could not go on looking—Take it away! put it on the table for me, and don't let any one suspect anything!"

Miss Kent crossed the broad hearth rug a little unsteadily and there was a queer look on her face as she put the green bowl down on the table. Miss Montague, by the fire, had stood still for a moment and then turned to the great china jar and lifting the cover took out some of Mrs. Goddard's treasured bits of lightwood to fling them on the bright coals.

"She writes us the most quaint, delightful letters, does Mrs. Patton," said Miss Kent, taking up the story, for some one asked if anything were the matter. "She likes to have us send her magazines and stories to read. Oh, I assure you that by the time we took the road again late that morning we were the very best of friends!"

"It certainly did turn out very well," pronounced

Mrs. Crosdyck with great amiability, "but I should feel very anxious about you if you were girls of mine, driving about in this way in these lonely places!"

"Where are you going for your driving journey this year, young ladies?" inquired an old gentleman who had just waked up from a good nap.

"Oh, first to Mrs. Patton's again!" answered Katie Montague gallantly. "We have promised to spend a night at her dear little house."

The bright firelight shone upon Katie's face, but she spoke with cheerful determination and instant decision, though more than one of the guests noticed that she looked strangely pale. Then she rose quickly and stood facing them.

"You know," she said, "that I shall have to tell my *companion* all that has happened about the green bowl!" But though every one, even the sleepy old gentleman, begged to know what had really happened, Katie could not be persuaded to tell anything more.

"Now, who next?" demanded Mrs. Goddard.

"Here's Wickam come back," remarked a masculine, willing to betray another to secure immunity for himself.

"Oh, Mr. Wickam, we thought you—my *piece de resistance*—had deserted us."

"Only on the principle that 'he who fights and runs away, will live to fight another day'", quoted the young author. "The truth is, Mrs. Goddard, I

haven't any skill at telling a story—it's a faculty denied me—and as I wanted to do my share, I slipped upstairs and have brought back the manuscript of a story I've written while I've been here."

"Oh! Delightful!" came a chorus.

"And strangely enough," went on the writer, "it purports to have been told under circumstances curiously like this evening, though I finished it yesterday. I have named it **THE BROKEN STORY**," he ended, or began, as he unfolded the sheets.

THE BROKEN STORY

“IT was told, or perhaps I should say, happened, at Captain Tolbert’s one evening, when a lot of us had been bidden, and warned what was expected of us. It was a regular ‘story-telling party,’ arranged in cold blood, several famous raconteurs invited and everything arranged to make things effective, open fire, lights turned down and all that sort of thing, but—well, as I recall the evening, the most prominent figure in my picture is that of the old black man Mose, who tended the fire and served generally.

I remember that he made a great deal of noise with his feet. Every time he came in with a log upon his shoulder, the story-telling had to stop a moment.

Mose looked like a bit of realism out of the old South, as indeed he was. There was about him that proud humility which comes from the master-respecting servitude which dignifies the servant. There is sometimes an effusiveness in the carriage of even silence itself which bespeaks volubility on draught.

Captain Tolbert, the host, had had the register turned off for the occasion so that the open fire might have its full value which it never gets as a simply pictorial feature. He recalled more than one function where suffocating guests had hovered

about the glowing hearth only because they knew they were expected to hover.

"I want this lib'ry so cool this evening," he had said to Mose, "that when a man gets up to tell a story, he'll be mighty glad to stand befo' the fire and get his back wahn, and the ladies, bless their little white shoulders, why, they can sit around among the lamps and send me for their nubias."

The Captain was a southerner, and, seeing that he had travelled the world over and lived in the east for a number of years, he was always surprised that everybody "guessed it the first time," when he would naively drawl:

"Where do you reckon I was bawn and raised?"

Never mind which State he came from. He would tell you that himself quickly enough and that it was "a gyarden spot," too, but never under any circumstances would he inform you that he was one of its F. F's. And because it was true. There were "signers" and even a president behind him and Colonial houses all over his State, placarded for sale now, most of them, mark the ramifications of the roots of his extensive family.

A man like that need not bother himself about pronunciations or money-standards, even when he takes up his abode beyond the limits of the "gyarden". Tolbert always sent "home" for his razor-back hams, his white unbolted corn-meal and his tobacco, and although he was a bachelor, living alone in his apartments, the quantities of these im-

portations to his larder were sufficient to supply a large family, and he liked it to be so. "Shows I ain't living a narrow and selfish life" he told himself when he ran his eye down the bills and drew his cheques in payment.

The Captain was fairly well to do, having established a small business of his own in New York—a business which afforded him the dignity of an office in which he often congratulated himself he was "his own boss." And so, after tasting about during the first few years of his residence here, "Sampling the different sets" he laughingly expressed it, he finally settled into a unique place of his own with friends of all sorts and conditions.

He knew enough of the smart set who would have gladly launched him to have spoiled a slighter fellow. His real name, which it is a pity not to give, carried a good deal of weight in an introduction. It is printed in history books for public school children to study and is found on State maps even beyond the "gyarden." Tolbert was the name of one of his ancestors on his mother's side and he sometimes said that if he were not a——, he would "choose to be a Tolbert." So we are giving him his second best. You will excuse my telling you so much of my former host as much of the flavour of his story depends upon it.

On the present occasion Tolbert had thought it well to hint to Mose, that he was expecting rather an exceptional company. It would put the last fine

edge to the old man's manner, the "gilt aidge" he would have called it himself.

So, while arranging the chairs in the room earlier in the evening, Tolbert had let fall such telling bits as "This seat'll do for the admiral—padded and low for him. He's a little lame, now. Oh, yes, he's the man. Captured a whole fleet and didn't mention it. And the Dean—let's see. He has written so many books himself, I'll try to arrange for him to sit here, next these shelves. That top row with the red labels on them are all his. Oh, no, they are my property. I bought them. He just wrote them—that's all. And this funny little chair, I brought it in for tiny Miss Hunnicut. She is going to bring her banjo. She is so delicate and so little—it almost hides her when she plays—you'd never think of her as painting great pictures. One of hers is so large that she had to get up on a step-ladder to do it. She decorated the dome of the capitol of her own State—yes, the round top, that's the dome. And those camp chairs, the Croesus ladies will think it so jolly and Bohemian to sit on them. You'll know them by—Oh, yes, they are very rich—no, not by their diamonds—by their wraps, maybe, when they come in, all muffledy-fluffledy and bumptious and scrumptious and, well, you'll know them. They found out that I was to have some really distinguished persons here—that is people who have done things—and so they call it a menagery. They will find you very interesting, uncle Mose, and they'll be mighty apt to ask

you any number of questions, but don't let them embarrass you."

"No, Sir!" he exclaimed. "Dey ain' gwine 'barras me, no sirree! Don' keer how scan'lous rich dey is. Dey won't outdo me in manners. Ef dey put me to it *too* much, I'll get out my gilt aidges on 'em, dat what I'll do. Is dey friends o' yourn, Cap'n?"

"Why, yes, I suppose they are—friends of mine, certainly. And they are mighty fine women, too. One of them pays for a floating hospital and named it after her grandfather and another—well, they're both kind; let their names be used in any old show that society folks are getting up for causes. Yes, cert'n'y, they are friends of mine. But they had to ask to be invited all the samee. I should scarcely have thought of them otherwise."

The old man drew up his lips as if to whistle.

"Hew-wee!" You don't sesso! *Axed to come, is dey?* You better look out an' not do nothin' to look like you meant to th'ow it up to 'em. Dey mought git dey feelin's hurted. Dey sho' must a' think a heap o' you, dey sho' must."

Of course I had all this from Tolbert afterward.

* * * * *

"I've been noticing your old man, here, Tolbert," said the blonde man whom they all called the poet. (They called him so on account of his temperament and his hair. He never wrote anything.)

"I've been noticing the old fellow" he repeated, "And my opinion is that if we could induce him to tell it, he could give us the story of the evening. The fact is, he *is* a story—incarnate. He is perfectly delightful."

"Yes, isn't he delicious?" exclaimed the second Croesus lady, "Where did you trap him, Captain?"

"I found him—met him," Tolbert replied, looking at the poet and barely acknowledged the last question, "I met him one day going down Fifth Avenue—saw him shift his weight from one foot to the other and bend with great difficulty to pick up a rose which some one had dropped on the sidewalk. He had secured the flower and holding it in his hand, stood with his face buried in it when I spoke to him.

I saw that his eyes were closed and, mischievously thinking to startle him, standing thus dreaming over a flower in the midst of the crowded throng, I said:

"Hello, uncle Mose!"

For answer, he only put forth a hand detaining me. But when in two minutes, I should say—it seemed ten—he opened his eyes and clutched my sleeve, he exclaimed, scanning my face:

"Wh—wh—which one is you, any how?"

There was something in the face and the voice which drove the mischief out of me with a whiff, and I answered, respectfully:

"Oh, I'm not anybody in particular. I just spoke

to you because I saw you pick up the rose. I love roses, too."

"But de *name!* How'd you know my name?" He still held me.

I was ashamed to tell him that I had even forgotten what name had come to my lips as I accosted him. But while I hesitated, he came to the rescue.

"How'd you know dey called me Mose—an' Uncle Mose, at dat? What mek you call me dat—ef you don' know who I is?"

"Really, I do not know, uncle" I replied in all candour." I suppose I said Mose because it rhymed with nose—or rose." This silly answer which came of itself without any conscious volition amused me in its very inanity and I added, playfully, now:

"I suppose if I had found you smelling a lily, I'd have called you Uncle Billy."

But my frivolity found no answering note in the old man's mood.

"I wouldn't break my old back to pick up no lily," he replied, stolidly, regarding the rose again, "but dis *joint o' battles*—I don't see 'em every day, deze days. Why, I done smelt deze red roses in my sleep when I dreamed de old days back ag'in. We-all's gyarden was red an' sweet wid 'em. Used to gether 'em every day wid de dew on 'em for my yong Mistus, an' standin' heah, in de mids' o' forgetfulness, an' smellin' back de ole days, when I heah my name call-t dat-a-way, I dassent open my eyes too quick. I'd 'a' fell down."

"Of course I fetched the old darkie home with me. What else was a southerner to do? Especially, a southerner with—with a rose jar like this."

As he spoke, the Captain tipped back his chair and reaching behind him, lifted from his smoking-table a small jar. It was a curious squat-shaped affair, tinted a deep brown shaded to orange and with a picture of a live pipe on one side—that is a pipe with a glowing fire in its smoking bowl which was represented as held by two fingers which disappeared in the shading. The work was remarkably well done if it was a bit amateurish. He lifted the cover as he passed it around and while his guests smelt and admired it, he secured a pipe by a second backward stretch and when the jar came back to him, he held the pipe in his left hand against the picture.

"Recognise it?" he said.

"Sure!" exclaimed several voices at once.

"Got your fingers down fine, even to that daisy mole against your thumb joint, *damn'f they didn't!*"

This last was spoken close to his ear by the man who wrote that article on "Lingual Florescence." And so, it was in an aside to this same ear that Tolbert said in replying:

"No 'dam'f they's' about this, if you please. *She* painted it."

"And it's demnition pretty," persisted the neighbour, "but why, in kingdom come, don't you put tobacco in it? I'll give you a rose jar if you want one—honest Injun. I've got a bully one—

genuine thing, came from Sharon or Attar or wherever the real things come from and it's jolly."

"Thank you very much, Joe, but I reckon we'll keep this as it is. I don't know why I brought it out—or spoke of it. I have never done so before. Perhaps it is the genial company—or the fire—or the storm outside. I'm mighty glad it stormed since you-all were good enough to come. The story-telling spirit always sneaks in out of the snow on nights like this and hangs around the open fire. See those logs on the old man's shoulder, full of snow. Why hasn't some one asked me how they came to be snowed on—snowed on, in a New York cellar?"

"I was wondering about that when he came in before," said the Dean, but you and your rose jar were so fascinating that our interest in unexplained snow-flakes melted with them. But do tell us about these, before they, too, are gone."

"Shall I tell on you, uncle Mose?" Tolbert laughed, addressing the old negro who turned quickly and smiling and bowing, answered:

"Why, cert'n'y, Sir—cert'n'y, Sir. Ef you choose, Sir. Hit's de reel God A'mighty snow. I didn't mek it. 'Tain't none o' mine!"

"Indeed, it is real snow" said Tolbert, "I can testify to that. Why, gentlemen—ladies and gentlemen, I should say—uncle Mose has had those logs out in the fire-escape all day, getting them well sprinkled over, so that, as he said, he could 'fetch in weather-repo'ts on his shoulder' as he used to do

in old times. He contends that a snow-covered log makes a cheery fire and a merry company. And I rather liked the idea."

"So it do," said Mose, bowing apologetically, "So it do. A snow-kivered log'll wek up de fun-devil quicker'n anything—les'n it's a late-comer, snowed over."

"And here we have both" said Tolbert, as he rose to greet a guest who was mischievously exhibiting a snow-sprinkled back at the door before taking off his top-coat.

"Nothing like being popular," he called out, "Cap'n sends out permission cards and here we all are, every mother's son of us, neither rain nor shine."

"Knew you'd be here, that's why" retorted Tolbert, "been waiting for you this hour past," and as he presently brought him in, he added.

"We were just saying—that is my man, uncle Mose, here, was telling us that there's nothing like a belated snowed-over guest to start up the fun-devils. So you are even more valuable to us than those snow-sprinkled logs that he's chuckling over as he lays them on the coals."

As the two approached the hearth and the old man bowed himself away, he laughed:

"Jes, listen at de jokes a-poppin' an' see dem white logs fling out challenges at de late-comer. Joy won't wait for de mornin' now!"

"But the tobacco-jar," exclaimed a voice behind

the samovar, with irrelevant insistence, "Don't let us forget that."

"Oh, bother the tobacco-jar," mused Tolbert, stroking his knees at the fire. But he recovered himself, quickly.

"Well"—, he smiled genially.

And rising he went back to his old place.

"Since I have opened the door—" he resumed, half sadly—"since I've—but really, there's nothing particular to tell. I said she painted it. I suppose there's a 'she' in every good man's life, even if it be only a hovering influence—a memory, or a hope. Mine—is a memory,—and she wore *Giant of Battles* roses—in the good old days before the invasion of the Jacques which have since possessed the gardens. Really, that's about all. Yes, she painted the tobacco-jar. I said she did. It is a bit realistic, as you say, even to that foolish little mole which she playfully declared she painted in only for identification."

It sits on my table—where she intended that it should sit—but it will always hold red rose-leaves. That—"

He pointed to a miniature upon the wall.

"That is her picture. The leaves of that very rose she wears in her hair went first into the jar—yes—"

"She was very beautiful," interrupted a very tall, very young girl who had risen to examine the ivory bit.

"Yes,—she—is," said Tolbert, thoughtfully. "That—this—is my story-corner" he hastened to add, indicating with a sweep of his arm, a group of things upon the wall.

"You say she *is* beautiful?" The question came from a slender blonde who did not look vicious—she was not. There appears to be in every company one person at least of whom the present amiable lady was a type, one whose curiosity has just the vulgar edge which carries it a little too far—and which cuts as it goes. They have to be snubbed and snubbing is a delicate art, to be attempted only by the finely bred.

"Yes, I said *is*," replied Tolbert, with an amiable inclination of his head toward the speaker, and then he added, smiling blandly:

"And then, I think I was saying that this is my story-corner, Miss Carlington"—still addressing the blonde—"I had not thought of it before, that is I had not consciously made it so—I hate 'collections' and cozy-corners are my abomination—and yet, as I look it over, I realise that every article in this little nook—it nooked itself, mind, I didn't nook it—every article in it has other value than that which we call intrinsic. Indeed, if everything here was given speech and memory—and precedence to us—we should not have a chance to get out our little stories for a week—or at all, maybe. You see, one story involves another and we should have to listen, not only to the tales themselves, but to replies from—let's

see: There would be a hopping denial from King Edward to what that scarab would tell—a thrilling retort from a Spanish nobleman who died on a boat up the Nile. Yes, that pointed basket would tell that story. I got it there, myself. No, he didn't give it to me. He never saw it. He was hunting for a lady who was hunting for it when I found it. No, she had never seen it, either, and no, I never saw her. Indeed, I am not quite certain that there was a lady in the case. The only thing I am sure about is the basket and there it is—but the whole situation was very suspicious. It is said that the basket is haunted and that the lady and the nobleman are its spooks. Yes, it is a curious story, but it is too long for now. Then, there is the story of that little bead bag with the silver top with the snake design. That is Dutch, but I bought it from a Spanish gipsy who told our fortunes from the back of her wagon at Niagara—told them in a strong Irish brogue. Oh, yes, gipsies often have brogues. and,—certainly, those are real cannon-balls on the bracket. Everything here is real—even to my old man, Mose. He isn't gotten up for the occasion, I assure you. And that baby's shoe with the rifle-ball through it—that was found in the breast-pocket of a grey-coat after Chickamauga. Yes, that stain is—what it seems. Of course, that isn't a story for now, either." Then adroitly changing the subject he turned to Le Few who was examining something under a lamp. "I'll

be bound for you, Le Few, to pick out an interesting relic," he laughed.

"This is interesting" Le Few answered without looking up, "This little old frame with the faded scrap in it, torn in half, I should say—interests me exceedingly. I believe if I were given my choice, I should say let us have the story of this little document. It seems to be part of a legal paper of some sort. Yes, I'll even go so far as to admit that I'd rather listen to the story of this than to one of my own—which is saying a good deal."

Everybody laughed at this for they all knew Mr. Le Few's stories and they liked them, over and over, as they liked him.

"That belt with all the stars on it—hanging there on the Dutch lamp—is interesting" said Jamie Hodge. Hodge was one of the wittiest of men and a casual remark like this from him was a disappointment. While they wondered where the joke was hiding, Le Few said:

"Sounds as if you might be referring to Orion—talking about stars in a belt."

"So it does," said Hodge, "And talking about Orion reminds me of O'Brien. Have you heard that story about Barry O'Brien? It's a sort of astronomical affair; that is it is the story of a star. Her name in private life is Lydia Lumpkins, I believe and she is with the Hiatus Stock Company."

"That story has three current versions, to my

knowledge, friend Hodge," said Le Few, and two of them at least would need expurgating before you could offer them. So, suppose we decline to allow a man of your reputation to take any of this evening's precious time in telling fragmentary tales."

"Very well," said Hodge, "It'll be your loss. I was going to tell only the expurgations—but I won't do it now, just for spite."

"Oh, do. How great!" exclaimed the middle Croesus lady. "Oh, I am having *such* a good time! If I could only put some of these things down. I'll be sure to forget them. Suppose we choose things to remember" whispered her friend on the left. "I'll remember about the—and you'll—but wait, they're going again." It was Le Few and they knew him well.

"Talking about astronomy" he began, "what of that big dipper hanging under the mandolin. Or, no, not what about it, either? I have chosen my story. I want to hear about the old paper. A man of less discernment than myself might choose the dipper story. Some one drank out of it, I suppose. I have never been interested in drinking people, myself."

As he spoke, he slyly but quite publicly pushed his glass toward the decanter of Cognac. Of course, everybody laughed. People always laugh at any jest about drinking and they always laugh when Le Few opens his mouth. And, as to the latter, be it said, they generally laugh with good reason.

"Yes," said the host, passing around the old

gourd, "somebody drank out of it. The old one-armed Confederate soldier who sold it to me said that he saw Jef' Davis drink out of it, and that he then made it his business to tote it around and got all the notables to use it. He swore that General Lee and General Custer and General Grant and Abe Lincoln all drank out of it besides Jef' Davis and that one spirited southern lady refused to—because of its mixed associations. Charged me twenty-five cents apiece for the drinkers and threw in the dipper for good measure—for 'lan-yap,' as they say in New Orleans. Cost me a dollar and a half—this old gou'd did."

"You mean a dollar and a quarter."

"No, I mean what I say, a dollar and a half. I insisted on paying for the lady who refrained. I dote on a spunky woman. Why, I've had twice the fun thinking about that woman that all the rest together have given me."

"I am surprised to think you were so easily gulled, Tolly" said young Holt.

"I wasn't gulled, as you call it—not at all," laughed the host. "The fact is the old fellow was in a bad way, all ragged and pretty thirsty, and a dollar and a half was enough to make him entirely happy for a while and I was glad of an excuse to give it to him. I think it likely that Jef' Davis did drink out of the old gou'd. The soldier was a Houston chap, and Davis had been down there a short time before. But perhaps the real reason I bought it was

this: I knew that Davis drank from one well in Houston for my mother's brother, uncle John Tolbert, entertained him and he not only cut a fresh gou'd for the president to drink from, but he saved the piece and he gave it to me—and I've got it yet. Now, when I bought that drinking-gou'd, I was fairly dizzy with excitement hoping that my little cap would fit, or nearly fit. It would have been a curious coincidence."

"But it didn't?" said a chorus.

"No of course not. They never do. This world is a fair and alluring field of misfits."

"Speaking of misfits," said Le Few, "Or of fits, perhaps I should say, we have been anxiously hoping that you would tell us that the young mistress who wore the 'Joint of battles' roses whose perfume has followed your old man' life, proved to be the same as your lady of the rose-jar. That would make a pretty story."

"Pretty, yes, but not true. No, if the old man suspects that I cherish more than a general association with the rose that reigned in many a southern garden a generation ago, he has given no sign of it. He knows of the rose leaves in my tobacco-jar, too, for I showed them to him. I even told him that our common love for the giant of by-gone days was his first real attraction to me, and when I found him reticent though pleased, I engaged him. If he had told a fairy-tale, I should not have been so much—well, I might have been as

much attracted, too, but differently. There is nothing finer than the dignity of reticence. We know that we love the red roses and we ask each other no questions. He came from another State than mine, in the far south.

"No, we met upon the ground of pure human sympathy only. I found that he was alone. He knew the every-day home ways of a southern man and was glad to come. And now, I suspect that his old heart is beginning to send out tendrils to me and I find myself continually dodging them. I fear the tearing away. I am a coward when it comes to the emotions. You know the old Virginia Creeper, how it commits itself in attachment, insidiously thrusting real roots into any old cranny and trusting it utterly. Well, such is an old negro's devotion. He is a human Virginia creeper.

"No, as I have said, the old man's roses and mine were only of the same variety, that is all. They are not often 'the same roses' in life." And then he added, as he glanced at the miniature, "I said she *is* beautiful." But he smiled genially as he turned to Le Few:

"Do let me fill your glass, Le Few. And pardon my talking so long. He is a brave man, indeed, who holds the floor in your presence."

"I should be too glad to have it held indefinitely, if only I might make this old paper speak from its frame."

Le Few still held the little document and was

examining it. "It seems to be a county license—if I am a judge of license," he added jocosely.

"A maker of law ought to know its antithesis" laughed a man against the mantel.

"Perhaps so," said Le Few, "at any rate he ought to know how to read English words of two syllables. I see the words 'license' and 'parish,' here, quite distinctly, though they are dimmed with time. There is also a date which appears to be 184-. I can't make out the last figure, but that brings it into the forties which is near enough. Vital things were happening to some of us in the forties."

"Yes, some of us were being born."

This made a laugh because it was spoken by a brave woman who had never married.

"They were the period of my courting days as your old man would say" said Le Few, "Everything seems to have been pink as I look back to the years between forty and fifty—even forty-nine which I suppose ought to appear yellow with the hue of gold ore. But speaking of this delightful curio, here—for even a common document becomes a curio when it is torn in half and framed and hung in a historic corner—I should say that the use of the word 'parish' instead of county probably places it in Louisiana. You know the old Franco-Spanish-American State is still divided into 'parishes.' I venture to guess, Tolbert, that this is part of an old marriage license issued 'way back in the forties in Louisiana. Am I right?"

"Yes, I believe you are right. It was called a license when it was issued, although the incident in its history which mutilated it, changed its character somewhat. I know only the main fact of its history and yet, I should not part with it for anything on earth. It is barely possible that there is a man living to whom I should be glad to surrender it, if I were to meet him, but that contingency is too remote to be considered. It seems strange to me sometimes that there are not more of what we call coincidences in life in its important affairs, seeing how often because of some trivial surprise meeting we are moved to exclaim 'How small the world is, after all!' Why, for instance, might I not expect to meet the one man to whom I am commissioned to surrender that poor little scrap?"

The old man was coming in with a log and Tolbert waited for him to lay it on the fire. Then, seeing him take the hearth-broom he went on:

"No, I don't know anything beyond the mere fact of that paper's meaning. It belonged to my old black mammy, the woman who was my second mother—my own died before I can remember—she who taught me my prayers and my superstitions and whom I hope to meet again in the better country—if I am 'a good boy.'

"She spoke of it as her divorce paper—or rather her 'divo'cement paper'—and such to all intent it was to her.

"So she called it when, dying, she laid it in my hand."

"How very pathetic!" exclaimed a stout old lady near the fire—a lady whose fan, lying upon her short lap always danced when she laughed and fell to the floor when she coughed.

Tolbert picked up the fan and presented it to her with the sort of bow that is pleasing to ladies of this stage—and then he coughed, too—a slight confession of controlled amusement in the situation with, perhaps, some embarrassment in the meagerness of his story, for his next words were:

"Really, I wish I knew more about the old paper—to tell you."

"Tell us all you know."

"Surely——"

"Do——"

"Well, if you are in earnest, I shall be pleased to tell it; but remember, that I warn you. The story is like the old document itself—torn in half. It is a broken story and I know one end of it only. You mustn't complain when I stop short."

"Go on—go on."

"Well ——"

"And this half story must do in place of any whole story I might tell——? That must be a bargain. A host can't assemble such a lot of raconteurs as I have succeeded in coralling here this evening and do all the talking himself. Look at Jamie Hodge over yonder and Luke Crane ready to burst with

tales that are literature and art—and having to listen while I haul in a crippled bit out of real life—a story that came into my hand well under way and which ended in the middle. Did it ever strike you, by the way, that that is the worst place for a story to break off? In the beginning when the appetite is just finely whetted—or toward the end when culminations are imminent—at these extremes a story is charged with electric currents and there is something fine in the very flash of disconnection.”

“Never mind about the flash” drawled Luke Crane—“go ahead with the current. If you don’t, some of the rest of us here will take the blooming business out of your hand. I need a beginning for my story. The end is all right; but it hasn’t any start. And I just see how I could take your scrubby little document here and make it lead up to my finish. So hurry along, if you don’t want to lose it.”

“And I,” said Le Few, “Was just thinking out a dandy finish to it. You know that huckleberry pie story? Well, I was thinking how interestingly I could make it end with a divorce-paper.”

“You want to adapt everything to modern society” said the Scotchman Fergus, who had made himself felt from time to time by his attentions to Tolbert’s dog. “However,” he added, “I can’t say that I think you would have very much scope. The way from huckleberry pie to a divorce might easily

be short—if the pie-lady should happen to be insistent.”

“You don’t like huckleberries evidently. Perhaps they would appeal to you more as ‘Blue b’ries’ as I believe your people call them.”

“No,” said the Scot, “I don’t like huckleberries. I don’t like anything that turns my cream into ink.”

“I am surprised—and you a literary man,” said Hodge. “I should suppose that anything which ended in ink would be acceptable to the likes of you.”

“No” puffed Fergus, lighting his pipe, “I am obliged to turn my ink into cream—or do without cream—and I do not like to see my methods reversed.”

“I suppose I am foolish to consent to talk about this paper seriously” interrupted the host, “for the fact is, I am a little sensitive about it. While there is not the slightest breach of confidence in my telling you what I know of it, I shall have to ask your respectful attention.”

You see where it has hung. The miniature above it is one of which I have already spoken. The two others in the group are of my parents. So you understand how I feel about old mammy’s Divo’cement paper.

Yes, the large portrait in the alcove is hers. It was painted by Brooks who, you remember, painted “The Pastor’s Visit”, now in the Corcoran art gallery. It is a fine portrait—true to the life. She

insisted upon the open Bible in her lap. Always made me find the page with "Many mansions" on it—and laid her finger there, though she could not read a word. She was very proud. Oh, yes, Uncle Mose has great respect for the picture. He keeps it dusted off, and one day when he didn't know I was around, I saw him lift his hat to it. He says he "s'lutes her settin' up in all that grandeur, and studies about another lady." As you said a while ago, he has his story, too, no doubt, and his connection with me is only another misfit in which he cheerily bides his time. Life is much the same the world over.

But before taking up the story of this particular document, I think I'd better tell you-all—as some of you may not know about it—that it is still a custom among the negroes in several remote southern communities to use the marriage license—I mean the instrument itself—in the wedding ceremony. And in this way:

The bridal couple, standing in the presence of witnesses, hold the license in their hands—each using the left hand as being next the heart—and standing thus, they repeat a formula about like this:

"With this License I thee wed, taking thee for my lawful pardner, for better for worser, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, in slavery and in freedom,—till death us do part—in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen."

I am not sure of the verbal accuracy of this, but I know it to be essentially correct, though the "slavery and freedom" clause has probably dropped out. I know several most respectable coloured families who proudly date the dignity of a family line from a similar wedding of which the documentary proof carefully preserved is a License, such as the one of which half is in evidence to-day. And these weddings were by no means always barren rites. There were occasionally bridesmaids and groomsmen, although, so far as I have been informed, they were never performed by ministers of the gospel or in churches. I suspect that this was a strictly civil marriage, unrecorded in the courts as having taken place, but easily traceable as legally allowed. The custom was probably practised by such as were not in any regular church connection—by the "unregenerate". There were no infidels or agnostics in those days—among these people. I doubt whether there are any to-day.

Mammy, as I remember her, was always an old woman to me—just as our mothers always seem old to us—and it is hard for me now to realise that she was young and comely when I was a boy of six, for she was only about twenty-eight years my senior. The romance of her life was done and over when my father bought her, and I can truly say that no lady ever preserved the dignity of real widowhood with more reserve and grace than did that old negro. I distinctly remember when our butler and the coach-

man and other servants about the place tried to make love to her. I have myself written for them more than one impassioned love-letter, well knowing what their fate would be. I have seen them curl and flare as she silently laid them upon the coals and watched them burn.

For twenty-five years mammy was an inmate of our home, and although she spoke of other things belonging to her former life, she did not during this time allude in any way to a romance. I think I have forgotten to say that she came from a distant state from which she was sold at her own request. It seems that my people knew that she had quarrelled with her husband—and had been divorced. And by the bye,—you see, I am no story-teller, I'm afraid I've opened my eyes—I neglected to say in the proper place that these "License Marriages" were considered legally broken by the tearing in half of the "License paper". To tear it in the presence of witnesses, each holding it as at the wedding, was to obtain the best regular divorce, but the "broken paper" itself was sufficient proof of the dissolution of the tie as witnessed by the whole instrument. For a man to be able to whip out half of a marriage License was to prove himself a respectable *divorcé*. So now you may begin to understand how that bit of old paper got its name and significance.

If I have to stop my story for you to stir the fire, Mose, I'm afraid I'll never find my place again.

Wait till some of these celebrated story-tellers get a-going, and then warm us up.

I am telling about my old mammy, your friend, in her frame there, and if you would like to hear it, draw that ottoman to the door and sit down. That's right.

By this time Mose had returned and taken his seat.

"As I was saying," Tolbert began again, "This isn't much of a story, because there isn't a lie in it. This little gentleman over here will tell us something worth while in a minute. He is a perfect store-house of fanciful tales, but his *won't* do to tie to. He makes up every lie he prints, but he does it so well that we are all glad to buy them."

"If you will excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to go back and repeat a little for uncle Mose's benefit."

The old man was barely seated, but he rose now and with such manner that even his stiffness seemed a grace, he said:

"No, Sir, you nee'n't to repeat nothin'. I been a-listenin' at de do'."

This happy bit of ingenuousness caused a ripple of amusement, of course,—a ripple which the old man was quick enough to understand and in a twinkling he was on his feet again.

"Excuse me, Sir, excuse me, do" he bowed with an air that would grace a court. "I listened at de *open do'*. I ain't no key-hole man! I gethers de

raveled aidges o' parler conversation jes' de same as de Bible say a man kin gether crumbs wha' fall f'om de master's table, an' I cert'n'y hopes I ain't forgot my manners an' behaviour in so doin'."

His guilt edges were on.

"Cert'n'y not, old man — cert'n'y not," said Tolbert, "I wouldn't have any respect for a man who could live with me for two years and not know a few good yarns. But while I've been dragged away from my story, in spite of all that I could do, suppose you go and fix up the fire a little. I am beginning to 'crawl down the spine o' my back,' as mammy used to say when she was chilly."

While Mose was engaged at the fire, the crowd gathered about the lamp to examine the old paper. But the scrutiny was not very encouraging. Even with the aid of a magnifying-glass, it was possible only to decipher the words easily read at a glance. There were dim printed letterings at the head, a blurred date and the last letters of a woman's name.

"This," said Le Few, is, as I said at first, a parish License, dated some time in the forties—name of Parish not given, though it seems to have ended with an n. The beginnings of the names of both contracting parties are gone, but the woman's Christian name evidently ended 'c, y,' and her last name began with a B. The entire name of the groom is missing—utterly blurred. There are sundry dim lines here and there and what they might hold as corrobora-

tion—if we had the name to fill in—I can not say. They might afford sufficient circumstantial evidence to hang a man.”

“Enough to hang an innocent man, maybe” said some one, “That is sometimes the end of circumstantial evidence.”

“Yes,” said Le Few, “Perhaps so, but don’t let us go into irrelevant discussions now, if you please. I am anxious to get to the tantalising middle of this story. I wish you’d go on and get there. The top of my head is fairly prickling from the habit of the late strands to stand on end with excitement. I never could endure suspense. That’s why I don’t run for president.”

“If that is your only reason, I shouldn’t think you would hesitate,” drawled Luke Crane, the corners of his eyes twinkling. “I have a reason for not seeking that office myself, but it is different. I shouldn’t have any more reason for suspense than you would. They’d think I was joking.”

“Well,” interrupted Tolbert before the laughter in the Scotchman’s corner had subsided, “There isn’t much more to my story, and I reckon I’d better carry it along. You know I never knew anything about this paper until Mammy was ill and going to die. Then she brought it out. If I had been aware of its existence all these years, no doubt I should have a romance worth the telling. It goes without saying that she loved this fellow all her life. It seems that he was a handsome darkie and, well, it

was a case of jealousy in the beginning, I fancy, and——”

“ You can see from her portrait how gentle and placid she was in her latter years. Her eyes were as mild and beautiful as a cow's and, indeed, I never saw her controlled by passion but once, and strange to say, that was when she lay dying. It was the day she took this old paper from beneath her pillow and gave it to me, with its story. She was very weak but she sat up in bed and while she tried to unfold it, her hands shook so that I took it from her and opened it in her presence. When at length the torn bit lay before her, she rallied herself and began to talk.

“ ‘ Marse Alf,’ she began, she always called me so when she was serious or ill or tenderly reminiscent. ‘ Marse Alf,’ she said, ‘ Read it out to me, please, Sir.’ ”

You can understand how difficult it was for me to do this, seeing the condition of the paper. However, I took it and beginning at the first line—which was the last half of it, remember—I read as well as I could and it was surprising to see how glibly she filled in the missing words. I ought to have written them down; indeed, I intended doing so, but she died one day suddenly, ‘ unexpectedly,’ as the long-dying always go.

Well, when I had gone over it with her that day, she said quite composedly, “ Now, wrop it up ag'in, please, Sir ”—she had had it wrapped and enclosed

in three envelopes, of graded sizes, and even they were time-dyed and worn at the edges.

"Now wrop it up, please, Sir," she repeated after I had put on its last cover and I saw that there was still an outer covering of cloth. When it was finally done up to her satisfaction, she said, "Now, slip it back under my head an' let it stay tell I'm gone. Den you tek it, please, Sir, an' keep it, an' maybe you mought come acrost 'im some time. An' ef you does, be sho' to give it to 'im an' tell 'im I craves to know it's mended. I don't want to set up mongs' de angels no lonesome divo'ced 'oman. Tell him I say dat, layin' heah on de aidge betwix time an' eternity, wid sight bofe ways, I see de fault was all mine. An' Marse Alf, ef you wouldn't mind——?" she hesitated here, evidently timid, "Ef you wouldn't mind," she repeated, "maybe you mought call over de yeahs to him sence you was a baby an' ef you could see yo' way to tell 'im dat yo' ole Mammy *kep' 'erse'f out o' harm's way*.

An' tell 'im I done had all de satisfaction out o' my anger, an' it was bitter food to chaw on when it was cold—an' I knowed I had chose my life-cud. An' ef he's done consolated 'isself wid some other 'oman, I wont hold it ag'in 'im—*but I don't b'lieve he is*.

Having let herself go thus far, she was seized with sudden animation and rose up on her elbow. "Marse Alf" she cried, drawing the parcel from its place and laying it before me, "You see dat

little bundle an' you know what's in it! Dat little paper, it's de image o' my life, tore in half, an' broke an' ole. Dat little yaller scrap stan's for love an' husban's an' chillen' an' maybe by dis time, gran'-chillen to bless me. But instid o' dat, I boun' to answer de call an' go to meet de Marster like de man in de tex', wid my one talent done up in a napkin. God seemed to gimme jes' one talent. Jes' to love—dat's all. An' de wrong side o' love' hit's hate. When I was yo'ng, I reckon I must 'a' been good-lookin'—for a gal o' my colour. Anyway dey used to let on to me dat dey liked my looks—an' my ways, too, all de yo'ng fellers, did. I could 'a' married my pick o' de whole caboodle—all 'cep'n Jerry."

"Excuse, me, Sir." It was the old man at the door, old Mose, who interrupted at this sensitive point. "Wh—what was dat name you say?"

"Jerry, was the name she called, Moses," said the host, "Well, said she, 'Jerry, he nuver axed me, an' dat made me mad, an' de mo' I pondered on him not axin' me, de mo' look like I craved to mek 'im say de word, but no, Sir, he'd prom'nade wid me—an' dance wid me—an' walk for de cake wid me—an' climb dange'ous vines for muscadines an' flowers an' write me po'try-notes. His white Mistus, she done 'em for him, an' dey'd have *every word in 'em but de right one*. So bimeby, I got my dander up over him *havin' de impidence to keep still an' say nothin'* an' I say to him one day, I say: 'Huccome you ain't nuver is axed me de fatal question, Jerry?'

Jes' dat-away, I axed him, an' he made answer dis-away: ' You don't say Milady Git-'em-all, dat you ax me dat. No', he say, *I ain't nuver is axed you* an' I ain't nuver is *gwine* ax you! Blessed is de man dat expects nothin for he shall not be disap-p'inted. So long as I don't ax you, you can't say no. An' wid dat, he riz up tell he was mighty nigh tip-toe an' he looked at me, up an' down, th'ough an' th'ough, an' he say, ' Nance Ann Phoebe Maria—dats my whole name—he say, ef you was ever to git sech a holt on me dat I'd be blegged to ax you to marry me an' den you was to 'fuse me wid all yo' parlour-manners, *I'd kill yer*, an' den I'd call on Gord A'mighty to strike me dead, too. I wouldn't suicide myse'f into Hell' he say, 'but arter I'd done kilt my beloved, I'd pray to die.' ”

“ Well, when he talked dat-a-way, I see how he loved me, an' so I jes' shuk myse'f an' twis' my foot on de gate an' broke a rose in half an' I say:

“ Whose talkin' bout refusin' ? ”

So you see, hit was a fire an' tow match f'om de beginnin'. An' we was legally married, wid a license-paper in de presence o' witnesses—dey was six nachel signachur-crosses on dat paper, signed by six witnesses. Seem like dat was enough to tie de knot tight, but it didn't hol' long. Befo' de yeah was out, I was tooken sick—I had dese heah bronchical chubes in my th'roat an' dey'd weeze an' mek me cross an' I had to lay down in de bed fer over a month. An' dat's how I commenced to study over

things. Jerry, he used to sing in de chu'ch an' when I couldn't go, he's tek a neighbour-gal, an'—well, you know jealousy, hit's a sick 'oman's ha'nt. It ha'nted me tell I got cross, 'twix dat an' my sickness, an' one day when I tuk him up short, Jerry, he up an th'owed it up to my face dat *I had p'oposed to him*. Well, dat was enough. Dem words was de two-aidge blades dat cut dat License into a divo'cement-paper, howsomever I tore it wid my hands. But it was like cuttin a dead body in half. Jerry's words had killt it. I was weak, but I jumped out o' bed an' I callt in two or three o' de folks wha' had seen us married, an' I got out de paper, an' when I started to tear it, Jerry, he begged me for God's sake to spare it, but de tiger-cat was awake in me, an' well, whilst he had aholt of it tryin' to save it I ripped it down. Dat's huccome it come to be tore so crooked. Of co'se, I felt mighty 'shamed when I had cooled down, an' yit, you see, I had done what I done in de presence o' witnesses, an' I was dat proud, I knowed I'd niver give in. An' dat's why I begged my marster to sell me to a far state an' he wouldn't do it tell a yeah had passed. Den he see I was keepin' one good man out in de col', an' I reckon I was conductin' myse'f wid too much biggity, too, so he up an' sol' me to yo' pa. You see, ef Jerry had 'a' said anything else, I'd a got over it,—I don't min' light devilment—but *me—me! Me*, dat could 'a' married any man on six plantations, f'om de preachers down—me dat helt myself so high dat I

could affo'd to speak de word for Love's sake—to have him fling it in my face—an' me layin' sick—an' dat yaller-freckled devil in de nex' cabin' laughin' so I could heah her f'om my bed when dey'd come home from church at night—Well, a knot cut in a minute is broke for all time.'

"Now, Boy—" she stroked my hand as she called me so, and it was as if I were a child again, 'Now, Boy, you know why yo' ole lonesome Mammy allus warned you not to part wid nobody in anger.'"

Of course, this is a meagre account of her story, said Tolbert, imperfect excepting as to the dialect which I really believe I know. This is all the broken story. I wish I could give it to you with half the palpitating passion of the dying woman. As she sat there—for her growing excitement had soon lifted her to a sitting posture—grey about the lips as I had never seen her—she seemed for a moment strange to me and remote, and I realised that the woman, Nancy, whose life-tragedy I had just heard was quite another than the soft-voiced 'Mammy' who had blessed my life, and for a moment, I felt almost afraid of her. We are all many-sided. Perhaps her passion-part was fierce and impossible and she may have made things pretty warm for the poor fellow, Jerry, who seems meekly to have accepted her decree."

The recital had been so dramatic and interesting that all eyes had been fixed upon Tolbert, and it was only while he hesitated, now, that they turned to the

old Negro, Moses, who was standing well out toward the middle of the room.

When he realised his conspicuous position, and that he was suddenly the object of attention, he raised a trembling apologetic arm.

"Excuse me, Sir, excuse me. Excuse me ladies an' ge'mmen," he began, "But de marster o' de house is axed me to set down an' listen an' I is done so wid all proper coloured manners an' behaviour; but listenin' is one thing an' keepin' still is another. For de las' few minutes I been like a man stunned an' I don' know ef I been hearin' straight or not.

"Dey's some mistake been gwine on heah, to-night, an' I can't keep still no longer. Dey's so much been tol' straight, accordin' to de facts o' de succumstance dat I sca'cely knows whar to begin. But I 'bleeged to speak!"

Then he turned to Captain Tolbert.

"Hit looks strange to me, Cap'n Tolbert, dat de lady wha' intrusted you wid dat divo'cement-paper ain't give you de name o' de man wha' got a right an' title to claim it. Hit do seem strange to me,—hit sho' do."

"But she did, uncle Mose. I did not realise that I had not mentioned that. She spoke of him as Jerry, but she said that in wiping her tears from the paper one day, she blurred out the name. She insisted, though, that it was still there, in the tear-stain, and that God would know it. It was 'Jerry M. Tomlinson,' if I remember——"

"Sh—hush! My God, don't say no mo', please, Sir—don't say no mo'.

"Dey's some mistake heah," he repeated, shaking his head. "Dey's some mistake. Either one o' dese heah docimints is a counterfeit—de divo'cement-paper or the po'trait, one.—

"You see—excuse me talkin', ladies an' ge'men, but dis heah ain't no fanciful tale. Of co'se, I know it ain't no parlour-story, nuther. Hits a ole nigger-cabin hist'ry, dat's all—but dey's life an' death in it—yas, Sir, life an' death.

"I knows some'h'n 'bout de case o' dat divo'cemint-paper, but, but—dat ain't de lady's po'trait, no, *Sir!* Why, she was slim as a okry-stalk an' nimble as a deer. Dis fat ole lady wid de fine hankcher on 'er head—I ain' sayin' nothin' ag'in 'er—but—but—"

He had turned toward Tolbert as he spoke and approaching him now, and unfastening his coat as he talked, he said:

"No, Sir, I'll show you. Dat ain't her pictur'. Will you please, Sir, loan me yo' pen-knife—ef you please, Sir."

Taking the knife, he made an effort to cut some heavy stitches in the breast-lining of his coat, but his fingers trembled and he was awkward and had to be helped.

"No, indeedy, dat ain't her likeness—no, Sir!" he kept repeating, as the stitches slowly gave way. They seemed to have been sewed with twine. "No,

indeedy. But I got some'h'n' heah—I'll show yer—but dat ain't *her* 'garry-type—No, Sir."

Of course, every one was eager to see the picture which he would produce, fully expecting it to reveal the face of a young and comely girl.

"Wh—wh—whar dat divo'cemint-paper?" he stammered when at last he had drawn out a torn bit which he now carefully, albeit with trembling, unfolded and laid upon the glass face of the framed fragment. There was no doubt of the genuineness of this exhibit. Each ragged outline fitted exactly into that of the paper beneath it.

He shook so, seeing the finished story before him that Tolbert brought him a glass of Cognac. The habit of holding his emotions in the presence of his betters was life-long, however, and it was but a moment before he was quite calm.

Reaching forward, he drew with his finger the irregular line across the face of the glass.

"She say she tore it so crooked in temper" he said presently, "An' so she did—so she did—but hit was all my fault. She warn't to blame, no ways. Instid o' me a-grabbin' it an' tryin' to hender 'er, I oughter had grabbed *her* an' *whupped her good*, an' hid de paper by *main fo'ce*. Dat what I oughter did. I ain't no 'oman-beater, but dey's life an' death cases whar de bes' doctors has to give pizen. Ef I'd 'a' did *dat*, I'd a *kep' 'er*. But she allus had de upper hand o' me, somehow, an' whilst I wrestled wid 'er, beggin' 'er like a fool to save it, she had me divo'ced

"Oh, hursh, Cap'n, for Gord sake, hursh!" he chuckled, "You know dat's my divo'cement-paper I mean to say you know dat's my license, my cert'ficate, you knows dat good as I does. Ain't de paper *proved itse'f*?"

"Well, yes, as you say, the paper is surely genuine. It has proved itself. This is a case of indisputable circumstantial evidence strong enough to hang a man."

"Yas, Sir, or to save him."

"Well, so far so good, but supposing now," insisted Tolbert, who was unconsciously working the drama a little for his guests, "Suppose that some fine day another man should come along and recognise the portrait instantly and tell a similar story of a divorce-paper and say he had lost his part of it. What would I do? Besides, Mose, my man, I am forced to say that you are not altogether like the fascinating youth whom Mammy described."

Perhaps his ears were dulled, for instead of answering, the old man hobbled across to the portrait and standing before it, scanned it closely, at one angle and another.

"You see," he said presently, "Nancy, she was altogether diff'ent. Why, she was a notable dancer, slim an' fleet as a doe. Why, she won eve'y cake dat she ever walked for, she an' her pardner. An' dis lady——"

"And who was her partner?" interrupted Tolbert.

"Who! Why, me, of co'se, Sir. Who you reckon?"

"She and you. Is that so? Well, now, suppose you turn around and look into that mirror behind you. The eyes of that portrait are looking straight at the reflection there. Do you think, that if they could see—if they *can* see, for her spirit often seems to be there, looking through them—do you think they recognise that wrinkled old codger as the nimble partner who won cakes with her with fancy light-steps in the old days?"

For answer, the old man dropped his head.

"No, Sir, I spec' not," he said sadly, turning away, "I spec' not." As he moved, he happened to throw his eyes back into the mirror, back and upward. It was as if he were appealing to Heaven and had been granted a vision, for he started violently and gasped—then slowly lifted his arms, and his voice was as the ghost of a shriek as he gasped hoarsely:

"It's her! My Gord, it's her! Nancy—Nancy—Nancy! Sho's you born, it's her. Lord, Lord. De garrytype denied her to me, but de merror done brung her back. Glory be to Gord." And standing thus, with arms still lifted, he sobbed softly. But presently a change came over him and it seemed for a moment as if he had lost his mind.

With arms still raised, he had closed his eyes, and turning, as if to seize a partner for the dance, in a

voice low at first but swelling as it went, he began to sing, stepping with the measure :

“ Oh, gimme a June-day,
Jes’ long about noon-day,
An’ fin’ me a spot in de shade,
Whar mockin’-birds sings
In de muscadine swings,
To me an’ my yallery maid.”

“ I’ll accept that! You are identified, old man!” exclaimed Tolbert, tears running unmolested down his own cheeks, “ Why, Mammy has sung that to us children and danced those very steps by it a hundred times. God bless me, how it brings back my boyhood to hear it again! I wonder if you remember one called ‘ Whippoorwill? ’ ”

“ Whupperwill? Cert’n’y. Dis de way she go. But no. I’d haf to make ‘ten’ like I had a petticoat on—to dance *it* right. No, dat’s her dance. I could do it, mind you, but I wouldn’t, wid her maybe lookin’ on at my ole age an’ awkwardness. I used to dance one we called ‘ Hopper-toad ’, too, but hit’s too lively for me, now.

“ Maybe hit looks fastidious an’ flippery for me to be dancin’ now, dis-a-way, ladies an’ ge’m’men, but ——” He had turned formally to the company, now :

“ Maybe hit mought look awdacious an’ flippery to dance de way I done, when I jes’ heerd dat my lady is passed over, but ‘t warn’t no news to me. I been

knowin' it over a yeah—purty night two yeahs. She come to me in de sperit—way down Madison Parish, in Louisiana, whar we was married—she was a Vicksburg neighbourhoods gal an' Madison Parish, hit's jes' acrost de river f'om Maginolia plantation whar she lived, on de Louisiana-state side. Heap o' our co'tin'—sech as it was—was did on de water, in a narrer skift, de narrerer de better, I used to tell her. Dat was in de days o' my tantalisemint.

Well, one night about two yeahs ago, I was settin' out on de levee under a chiny-tree, lookin' at de drif'-wood an' callin' myse'f a log—seem like I was tossed hither an' yonder, any way de current th'owed me,—an' de moon, it went under a cloud, an' Nancy come to me in de sperit. Seem like hit was a voice in de tree when she fust spoke to me an' I looked up, an' jes' at dat minute de moon come out an' I see de tree was clair an' I knowed she had come herse'f in de sperit.

'Jerry, my love,' she say 'de paper is waitin' for yer. I saved it keerful—' You see, a divo'ced pusson is 'bleeged to save dey half o' de paper ef dey ever crave to make up, an' when she say dat, I knowed she niver had been divo'ced f'om me in 'er heart. An' whilst I listened, she kep on an' she say, 'I kin talk to you, caze I done mounted higher up, but you can't reach me 'tel you done cast off de outer gyarment o' de flesh.' An' wid dat, seem like her voice faded away an' I callt out to her: 'Whar de paper? Whar de paper?' But of co'se,

she couldn't hear me, an' I knowed it, an' yit I screamed tel I liked to bust my th'roat, but 'twarn't no use, an' bimeby a morkin'-bird started to sing right above my head an' dat silenced me an' trekly I heerd her voice once mo', but hit was mountin' de firment ag'in an' all I could stinguish out was some'h'n 'bout 'red rose' an' 'foller yo' leadins'—an' she was gone. An' de morkin'-bird, he flew right over my head, an' de moon, she sailed out white once mo' an' I got up an' walked de levee. But f'om dat minute I started to look for leadin's an' it warn't long befo' I was trabblin'. An' de fust red rose I foun' was on dis crowded Fif' Avenyer street—when you foun' me, bless de Lord!

So you see, ladies an' ge'men, when I skivered her to-night—an' got de paper—glory be to Gord, got de paper—seem like I had done foun' my bride ag'in, an' so I is—so I is.

Hurry up an' cancellate dat divo'ce-paper, please, Sir. Got it pasted, is you?" He turned to the host.

Tolbert had crossed the room to hand the stout lady her fan and while she wiped her eyes he left her struggling for composure and returned to the table. He took the mended paper and was about to slip it back into the frame when Mose protested:

"Don't do dat! No, Sir, don't do dat! Dat ain't gwine into no frame wid de scar o' dat fam'ly quarl acrost its face—*no*, Sir! No, jes' fold it up,

ef you please, Sir, ef you sho' it's dry, an' han' it over to me an' I'll put it whar it b'longs."

It was some minutes before it was satisfactorily pressed and folded, but when it was done, the old man only began to open his coat, indicating the place from which the other had come.

"Don't put it there," protested Tolbert. You might lose it! "That old coat isn't a fit place for——"

"Hit's de righteous place for it, Sir. Dis is whar it blongs. Dis is my grave-coat. I don't tek it out 'cep'n for special 'casions. I knowed dey was gran' ladies an' ge'men gwine be heah to-night, an' I allus puts it on for sech as dat.

"So dis ole inside-breas-pocket, dats its home. An when I die, I'll have my License on my breast an' I'll be free to knock at de do' an' ax ole Sin Peter for my wife."

* * * * *

It was very late, and the elderly members of the House Party rose to say good night. So much pleasure was expressed in the story-telling bout that it was arranged that the stories should be continued the next evening. Lots were drawn to see who should tell the first story, and it fell to Mr. Richard Field, Jr.

The next day there was no rain, but the turf was too wet for either long walks, or tennis, or golf. But all the traps were gotten out and the livery stable levied on, and the entire party got their first airing

in driving over the Macadam roads that stretched for miles about. So passed the day till dinner at seven, and after the coffee and *liqueurs* were served in the great library the time had come for Mr. Richard Field, Jr., to entertain the company with some tale from his life experience.

Mrs. Field, it had been noticed as early as breakfast time, was inclined to be nervous on her husband's account. Five years of married life had not cured her of this amiable symptom, and she made but a light meal. He, on the other hand, ate heartily, and without signs of disturbance. Apparently he was not even conscious of the glances that his wife so frequently stole at him.

"Do at least have some omelet, my dear," whispered Mrs. Hexamer urgently. "It's quite delicious."

But Mrs. Field could summon no appetite.

"I see you're anxious about him," Mrs. Hexamer continued after breakfast. "You're surely not afraid his story will fail to interest us?"

"No, it is not that."

"It can't be that he has none ready yet!"

"Oh, no; he has got one."

"And you don't like his choice?"

"He won't tell me what it is!"

Mrs. Hexamer put down her knitting. "Then, Ethel," she said with severity, "the fault is yours. When I had been five years married, Mr. Hexamer confided everything to me."

"So does Richard. Except when I particularly ask him."

"There it is, Ethel. You let him see that you want to know."

"But I do want to know. Richard has had such interesting experiences, so many of them. And I do so want him to tell a good one. There's the one when he saved a man from drowning just below our house, the second summer, and the man turned out to be a burglar and broke into the pantry that very night, and Richard caught him in the dark with just as much courage as he had caught him in the water and just as few clothes, only it was so different. Richard makes it quite thrilling. And I mentioned another to him. But he just went on shaving. And now he has gone out walking, and I believe it's going to be something about me."

At lunch Mrs. Field made a better meal, although it was clear to Mrs. Hexamer that Richard on returning from his walk had still kept his intentions from Ethel.

"She does not manage him in the least," Mrs. Hexamer declared to the other ladies, as Ethel and Richard started for an afternoon drive together. "She will not know anything more when she brings him back."

But in this Mrs. Hexamer did wrong to Ethel's resources. The young wife did know something more when she brought her husband back from their drive through the pleasant country. They returned

looking like an engaged couple, rather than parents whose nursery was already a song of three little voices.

"He has told her," thought Mrs. Hexamer at the first sight of them, as they entered the drawing-room for an afternoon tea. "She does understand some things."

And when after dinner the ladies had withdrawn to the library, and waited for the men to finish their cigars, Mrs. Hexamer spoke to Ethel. "My dear, I congratulate you. I saw it at once."

"But he hasn't. Richard hasn't told me anything."

"Ethel! Then what is the matter?"

"I told him something. I told him that if it was going to be any story about me, I should simply follow it with a story about him."

"Ethel! You darling!"

"Oh, yes, and I said I was sure you would all listen, even though I was not an author myself. And I have it ready, you know, and it's awfully like Richard, only a different side of him from the burglar one."

"But, my dear, what did he do when you—"

This enquiry was, however, cut short by the entrance of the men. And from the glance that came from Richard's eyes as they immediately sought out his wife, Mrs. Hexamer knew that he could not have done anything very severe to Ethel when she made that threat to him during their drive.

Richard at once made his way to the easy chair arranged each night in a good position for the narrator of the evening, and baptised 'The Singstool' by Mr. Young. Mr. Young was an ardent Wagnerian, and especially devoted to *The Mastersingers of Nuremburg*.

"Shall we have," he whispered to Mr. Zander, "a Beckmesser fiasco to-night, or will it be a Walter success?"

But Mr. Zander besides being an author and a critic, cared little for the too literary cleverness of Mr. Young. He therefore heavily crushed that gentleman's allusion to Wagner's opera. "I remember," he said, "the singing contest between Beckmesser and Walter, and I doubt if we are to be afflicted with anything so dull in this house."

Richard had settled himself in the easy chair, and was looking thoughtfully at various objects in the room, while the small-talk was subsiding around him.

"Why, Mr. Field," said Mrs. Hexamer, "you look as if you could find nothing to suggest your story to you."

"On the contrary," said Richard, "it is the number of things that suggest it. This newspaper here, that has arrived since I was last in the room, has a column which reminds me very forcibly of the experience that I have selected to tell you. But I think the most appropriate of all is that picture." He pointed to the largest on the wall. "'Breaking

'Home Ties' is its title, I remember very well. It is a replica of the original that drew such crowds in the Art Building at the World's Fair."

While Richard was saying this, his wife had possessed herself of the newspaper, and he now observed how eagerly she was scanning its pages. "It is the financial column, Ethel, that recalls my story."

Ethel, after a hopeless glance at this, resumed her seat near the sofa by Mrs. Hexamer.

"There were many paintings," continued Richard, "in that Art Building, of merit incomparably greater than 'Breaking Home Ties'; and yet the crowd never looked at those, because it did not understand them. But at any hour of the day, if you happened to pass this picture, it took you some time to do so. You could pass any of John Sargent's pictures, for instance, at a speed limited only by your own powers of running; but you could never run past 'Breaking Home Ties'. You had to work your way through the crowd in front of that, just as you have to do at a fire, or a news office during a football game. The American people could never get enough of that mother kissing her boy good-bye, while the wagon waits at the open door to take him away from her upon his first journey into the world. The idea held a daily pathos for them. Many had themselves been through such leave takings; and no word so stirs the general heart as the word 'mother'. Song writers know this; and the artist

knew it when he decided to paint 'Breaking Home Ties'. And 'MOTHER' is the title of my story to-night."

"'Mother'!" This was Ethel's bewildered echo. "Whose Mother"? she softly murmured to herself.

Richard continued. "It concerns the circumstances under which I became engaged to my wife."

There was a movement from Ethel as she sat by the sofa.

M O T H E R

“NOT all the circumstances, of course,” went on the narrator. “There are certain circumstances which naturally attend every engagement between happy young people, and which we keep to ourselves in spite of the fact that anyone who has been engaged is able to form a very correct idea of them. I imagine they prevail in all countries, just as the feeling about ‘mother’ prevails. Yes, ‘Mother’ is the right title for my story, as you will see. Is it not strange that if you add ‘in-law’, how immediately the sentiment of the word is altered?—as strongly indeed as when you prefix the term ‘step’. But it is with neither of these secondary forms of mother that my story deals.

“Ethel has always maintained that if I had really understood her, it never would have happened. She says—”

“Richard, I”—

“My dear, you shall tell your story afterwards, and I promise to listen without a word until you are finished. Mrs. Field says that if I had understood her nature as a man ought to understand the girl he has been thinking about for several years, I should have known she cared nothing about my income.”

"I didn't care! I'd have"—but Mrs. Field checked her outburst.

"She was going to say," said Mr. Field, "that had I asked her to marry me when I became sure that I wished to marry her, she would have been willing to leave New York and go to the waste land in Michigan that was her inheritance from a grandfather, and there build a cabin and live in it with me; and that while I shot prairie chickens for dinner she would have milked the cow which some member of the family would have been willing to give us as a wedding present had we so desired."

Richard made a pause here, and looked at his wife as if he expected her to correct him. But Ethel was plainly satisfied with his statement, and he therefore continued.

"I think it is nice when a girl is ready to do so much as that for a man. But I should not think it nice in a man to allow the girl he loved to do it for him. Nor did I then know anything about the lands in Michigan—though this would have made no difference. Ethel had been accustomed to a house several stories high, with hot and cold water in most of them, and somebody to answer the door-bell."

"The door-bell"! exclaimed Ethel. "I could have gone without hearing that."

"Yes, Ethel, only to hear the welkin ring would have been enough for you. I know that you are sincere in thinking so. And that is all we should have heard in Michigan. But the more truly a man

loves a girl, the less can he bear taking her from an easy to a hard life. I am sure that all the men here agree with me."

There was a murmur and a nod from the men, and also from Mrs. Hexamer. But the other ladies gave no sign of assenting to Richard's proposition.

"In those days," said he, "I was what in the curt parlance of the street is termed a six-hundred-dollar clerk. And though my ears had grown accustomed to this appellation, I never came to feel that it completely described me. In passing Tiffany's window twice each day (for my habit was to walk to and from Nassau Street) I remember that seeing a thousand-dollar clock exposed for sale caused me annoyance. Of course my salary as a clerk brought me into no unfavourable comparison with the clock; and I doubt if I could make you understand my sometimes feeling when I passed Tiffany's window that I should like to smash the clock.

"I met Ethel frequently in society, dancing with her, and sitting next her at dinners. And by the time I had dined at her own house, and walked several afternoons with her, my lot as a six-hundred-dollar clerk began to seem very sad to me. I wrote verses about it, and about other subjects also. From an evening with Ethel I would go next morning to the office and look at the other clerks. One of them was fifty-five and still received six-hundred—his wages for the last thirty years. I was then twenty-three; and though I never despaired to the extent of

believing that years would fail to increase my value to the firm by a single cent, still, what could I hope? If my salary were there and then to be doubled, what kind of support was twelve hundred dollars to offer Ethel, with her dresses, and her dinners, and her father's carriage? For two years I was wretchedly unhappy beneath the many hours of gaiety that came to me, as to every young man."

"Those two years we could have been in Michigan," said Ethel, "had you understood."

"I know. But understanding, I believe that I should do the same again. At the office when not busy, I wrote more poetry, and began also to write prose, which I found at the outset less easy. When my first writings were accepted (they were four sets of verses upon the Summer Resort) I felt that I could soon address Ethel; for I had made ten dollars outside my salary. Had she not been in Europe that July, I believe that I should have spoken to her at once. But I sent her the paper; and I have the letter that she wrote in reply."

"I"—began Ethel. But she stopped.

"Yes, I know now that you kept the verses," said Richard. "My next manuscript, however, was rejected. Indeed, I went on offering nearly every week until the following January before a second acceptance came. It was twenty-five dollars this time, and almost made me feel again that I could handsomely support Ethel. But not quite. After the first charming elation at earning money with my

pen, those weeks of refusal had caused me to think more soberly. And though I was now bent upon becoming an author and leaving Nassau Street, I burned no bridges behind me, but merely filled my spare hours with writing and with showing it to Ethel.

“It was now that the second great perturbation of my life came to me. I say the second, because the first had been the recent dawning belief that Ethel thought about me when I was not there. This idea had stirred—but you will understand. And now, what was my proper, my honourable course? It was a positive relief that at this crisis she went to Florida. I could think more quietly. My writing had come to be quite often accepted, sometimes even solicited. Should I speak to her, and ask her to wait until I could put a decent roof over her head, or should I keep away from her until I could offer such a roof? Her father, I supposed could do something for us. But I was not willing to be a pensioner. His business—were he generous—would be to provide cake and butter; but the bread was to be mine—and bread was still a long way off, according to New York standards. These things I thought over while she was in Florida; yet when once I should find myself with her again, I began to fear that I could not hold myself from—but these are circumstances which universal knowledge renders it needless to mention, and I will pass to the second perturbation.

"A sum of money was suddenly left me. Then for the first time I understood why I had during my boyhood been so periodically sent to see a cross old brother of my mother's, who lived near Cold Stream on the Hudson, and whom we called Uncle Snaggletooth when no one could hear us. Uncle Godfrey (for I have called him by his right name ever since) died and left me what in those old days six years ago was still a large amount. To-day we understand what true riches mean. But in those by-gone times six years ago, a hundred thousand dollars could still, as it were, be seen with the naked eye. That was my bequest from Uncle Godfrey, and I felt myself to be the possessor of a fortune."

At this point in Richard's narrative, a sigh escaped from Ethel.

"I know," he immediately said, "that money is always welcome. But it is certainly some consolation to reflect how slight a loss a hundred thousand dollars is counted to-day. And I did not lose all of it.

"I met Ethel at the train on her return from Florida, and crossed with her on the ferry from Jersey City to Desbrosses Street. There I was obliged to see her drive away in the carriage with her father."

"Mr. Field," said Mrs. Hexamer, "What hour did that train arrive at Jersey City"?

Richard looked surprised. "Why, seven-fifteen P. M." he replied. "The tenth of March."

"Dark"! Mrs. Hexamer exclaimed. "Mr. Field, you and Ethel were engaged before the ferry boat landed at Desbrosses Street."

Richard and Ethel both sat straight up, but remained speechless.

"Pardon my interruption," said Mrs. Hexamer smiling. "I didn't want to miss a single point in this story—do go on!"

Richard was obliged to burst out laughing, in which Ethel, after a moment, followed him, though perhaps less heartily. And as he continued, his blush subsided.

"With my Uncle Godfrey's legacy I was no longer dependent upon my salary, or my pen, or my father's purse; and I decided that with the money properly invested, I could maintain a modest establishment of my own. Ethel agreed with me entirely; and, after a little, we disclosed our plans to our families, and they met with approval. This was in April, and we thought of October or November for the wedding. It seemed long to wait; but it came near being so much longer, that I grow chilly now to think of it.

"Of course, I went steadily on with my work at the office in Nassau Street, nor did I neglect my writing entirely. My attention, however, was now turned to the question of investing my fortune. Just round the corner from our office was the firm of Blake and Beverly, Stocks and Bonds. Thither my steps began frequently to turn. Mr. Beverly had business which brought him every week to the

room of our president; and so having a sort of acquaintance with him, I felt it easier to consult him than to seek any other among the brokers, to which class I was a well-nigh total stranger. He very kindly consented to be my adviser. I was pleased to find how much I had underrated the interest bearing capacity of my windfall. 'Four per cent!' he cried, when I told him this was the extent of my expectations. 'Why you're talking like a trustee.' And then seeing that his meaning was beyond me, he explained in his bluff, humorous manner. 'All a trustee cares for, you know, is his reputation for safety. It's not his own income he's nursing, and so he doesn't care how small he makes it, provided only that his investments would be always called safe. Now there are ways of being safe without spending any trouble or time upon it; and those are the ways a trustee will take. For example,' and here he arose, and unhooking a file of current quotations from the wall, placed it in my lap as I sat beside him. 'Now here are Government three's selling at 108 3-8. They are as safe as the United States; and if I advised you to buy them, it would cost me no thought, and my character for safety would run no risk of a blemish. That is the sort of bond that a trustee recommends. But see what income it gives you. Roughly speaking, about twenty-eight hundred dollars.'

" 'That would not do at all,' said I, thinking of Ethel and October.

“ ‘Certainly not for you,’ returned Mr. Beverley, gaily. ‘If you were a timorous old maid, now, who would really like all her money in her stocking in gold pieces, only she’s ashamed to say so! But a young fellow like you with no responsibility, no wife, and butcher’s bill—it’s quite another thing!’

“ ‘Quite,’ said I, ‘oh, quite!’ ”

“ ‘Richard,’ interrupted Ethel, “do you have to make yourself out so simple”?

“ ‘My dear, you forget that we are all bound on this occasion to keep to actual experiences. The part of my story that is coming now is one where I should be very glad to draw upon my imagination.

“ ‘Mr. Beverley now ran his finger up and down various columns. ‘Here again,’ said he, ‘is a typical trustee bond, and nets you a few hundred dollars more at present prices. New York Central and Hudson River 3 1-2’s. Or here are West Shore 4’s at 113 5-8. But you see it scales down to pretty much the same thing. The sort of bond that a trustee will call safe does not bring the owner more than about three and one-half per cent.’

“ ‘Why there are some six per cent bonds!’ I said; and I pointed them out to him.

“ ‘Selling at 137 7-8, you see,’ said Mr. Beverley. ‘Deducting the tax, there you are scaled down again.’ He pencilled some swift calculations. ‘There’ said he. And I nearly understood them. ‘Now I’m not here to stop your buying that sort of petticoat and canary-bird wafer,’ continued Mr. Bev-

erly. 'It's the regular trustee move, and nobody could criticise you if you made it. It's what I call thoughtless safety, and it brings you about 3 1-2 per cent, as I have already shown you. Anybody can do it.'

"These words of Mr. Beverly made me feel that I did not want to do what anybody could do. 'There is another kind of safety which I call thoughtful safety,' said he. 'Thoughtful, because it requires you to investigate properties and their earnings, and generally to use your independent judgment after a good deal of work. And all this a trustee greatly dislikes. It rewards you with five and even six per cent, but that is no stimulus to a trustee.'

"Something in me had leaped when Mr. Beverly mentioned six per cent. Again I thought of Ethel and October, and what a difference it would be to begin on six instead of four thousand dollars a year, outside of what I was earning.

"Mr. Beverly now rang a bell. 'You happen to have come,' said he, 'on a morning when I can really do something for you out of the common. Bring me (it was a clerk he addressed) one of those Petunia circulars. Now here you can see at a glance for yourself.' He began reading the prospectus rapidly aloud to me while I followed its paragraphs with my own eye. His strong, well-polished thumbnail ran heavily but speedily down the columns of figures and such words as gross receipts, increase

of population, sinking fund, redeemable at 105 after 1906, churned vigorously and meaninglessly through my brain. But I was not going to let him know that to understand the circular I should have to take it away quietly to my desk in Nassau Street, and spend an hour with it alone.

“ ‘What’s your opinion of Petunia Water sixes?’ he inquired.

“ ‘They are a lead-pipe cinch,’ I immediately answered; and he slapped me on the knee.

“ ‘That’s what I think!’ he cried. ‘Anyhow, I have taken 10,000 for mother. Do what you like.’

“ ‘Oh well,’ said I, delighted at this confidence, ‘I think I can afford to risk what you are willing to risk for your mother, Mrs. Beverly. Where is Petunia, did not say?’

“ He pulled down a roller map on the wall as you draw down a window-blind, and again I listened to statements that churned in my brain. Petunia was a new resort on the sea-coast of New Hampshire. One railway system did already connect it with both Portsmouth and Portland, but it was not a very direct connection at present. Yet in spite of this, the population had increased 23 and seven-tenths per cent in five years, and now an electric railway was in construction that would double the population in the next five years. This was less than what had happened to other neighbouring resorts under identical conditions; yet with things as they now were, the company was earning two per cent on

its stock, which was being put into improvements. The stock was selling at 30 and, if a dividend was paid next year, it would go to par. But Mr. Beverly did not counsel buying the stock. 'I did not let mother have any,' he said, 'though I took some myself. But the bonds are different. You're getting the last that will be sold at par. In three days they will be placed before the public at 105.'

"I was well pleased when I left Mr. Beverly's office. In a few days I was still more pleased to learn that I could sell my Petunia sixes for 106 if I so wished. But I did not wish it, and Mr. Beverly told me that he should not sell his mother's unless they went to 110. 'In that case,' said he, 'it might be worth while to capitalise her premium.'

"I liked the idea of capitalising one's premium. If you had ten bonds that cost you par, and sold them at 110, you would then buy at par eleven bonds of some other rising kind, and go on doing this until—I named no limit for this process; but my delighted mind saw visions of eight and ten thousand a year, and I explained to Ethel what the phrase capitalising one's premium meant. I showed her the Petunias too, and we read what it said on the coupons aloud together. Ethel was at first not quite satisfied with the arrangement of the coupons. 'Thirty dollars on January first, and thirty on July first,' she said. 'That seems a long while to wait for those payments, Richard. And there are only two in every year, though you pay them a thousand dollars all

at once. It does not seem very prompt on their part.' I told her that this was the rule. 'But,' she urged, 'don't you think that a man like Mr. Beverly might be able to get them to make an exception if he explained the circumstances? Other people may be satisfied with waiting for little crumbs in this way, but why should we?' I soon made her understand how it was, however, and I explained many other facts about investments and the stock market to her, as I learned them. It was a great pleasure to do this. We came to talk about finance even more than we talked of my writings; for during that Spring I invested a good deal more rapidly than I wrote. The Petunias had only taken one-tenth of my hundred thousand dollars; and though Mr. Beverly warned me to rush hastily into nothing, and pointed out the good sense of distributing my eggs in a number of baskets, still we both agreed that the sooner all my money was bringing me five or six per cent, the better.

"I have come to think that it might be well were women taught the elements of investing as they are now taught French and Music. I would not have the French and Music dropped, but I would add the other. It might be more of a protection to women than being able to read a French novel, and perhaps some day we shall have it so. But of course it had been left totally out of Ethel's education; and at first she merely received my instruction and took my opinions. It was not long, however, before she began to

entertain some of her own, obliging me not infrequently to reason with her. I very well remember the first occasion that this happened.

"We had been as usual talking about stocks, as we walked on the Riverside drive on a Sunday afternoon in May. Ethel had been for some moments silent. 'Richard,' she finally began, 'if I had had the naming of these things, I should never have called them securities. Insecurities comes a great deal nearer what they are. What right has a thing that says on its face it is worth a thousand dollars to go bobbing up and down in the way most of them do? I think that securities is almost sarcastic. And have you noticed the price of those Petunias?'

'I had, of course, noticed it; but I had not mentioned it to Ethel. 'I read the papers now,' she explained, 'morning and evening. Of course the market is off a little on account of the bank statement. But that is not enough to account for the Petunias.'

"'Ethel, you are nervous,' I said. 'And it is the papers which make you so. The Petunias are a first lien on the whole property, of which the assessed valuation—'

"'What is the good,' she interrupted, 'of a first lien on something which depends on politics for its existence, if the politicians change their minds? Did you not see that bill they're thinking of passing?'

"I was startled by what Ethel told me, for the

article in the paper had escaped my notice. But Mr. Beverly explained it to me in a couple of minutes. 'Ha!' he jovially exclaimed, on my entering his office on Monday morning; 'you want to know about Petunias. They opened at 85 I see.' He then ran the tape from the ticker through his clean strong hands. 'Here they are again. Five thousand sold at 83. Now, if they go to 70, I'll very likely take ten thousand more for mother. It's all Frank Smith's bluff, you know. He wants a jag of the water-works stock, more than they say they agreed he should have. So he's shaking this bill over them which would allow the city to build its own water-plant, and of course run the present company out of business. Not a thing in it! All bluff. He'll get the stock, I suppose. What's that?' he broke off to a clerk who came with a message. 'Wants 500 preferred does he? Buyer 30? Very well, he can't have it. Say so from me. Now,' he resumed to me, 'take a cigar by the way. And don't buy any more Petunias until I tell you the right moment. Do you see where your Amalgamated Electric has gone to?'

"I had seen this. It had scored a 20-point rise since my purchase of it; and I felt very sorry that I had not taken Mr. Beverly's advice and bought a hundred shares. It had been on a day when I had felt unaccountably cautious, and I had taken only twenty-five shares of Amalgamated Electric. There are days when one is cautious and days when one is

venturesome; and they seem to have nothing to do with results.

“‘They’re going to increase the dividend,’ said Mr. Beverly, and I smoked his excellent cigar. ‘It’s good for twenty points higher by the end of the week. I had just got mother a few more shares.’

“I left Mr. Beverly’s office the possessor of one hundred and twenty-five shares of Amalgamated Electric, and also entirely reassured about my Petunias. He always made me feel happy. His keen laughing brown eyes, and crisp well-brushed hair, and big somewhat English way of chaffing (he had gone to Oxford, where he had rowed on a winning crew) carried a sense of buoyant prosperity that went with his wiry figure and good rough London clothes. His face was almost as tawny as an Indian’s with the out-door life that he took care to lead. I was always flattered when he could spare any time to clap me on the shoulder and crack a joke.

“Amalgamated Electric had risen five more points before the board closed that afternoon. This was the first news that I told Ethel.

“‘Richard,’ said she, ‘I wish you would sell that stock to-morrow.’

But this I saw no reason for; and on Tuesday it had gained seven points further. Ethel still more strongly urged me to sell it. I must freely admit that.” And the narrator paused, reflectively.

“Thank you, Richard,” said Ethel from the sofa. “And I admit that I could give you no reason for

my request, except that it all seemed so sudden. And—yes—there was one other thing. But that was even more silly.”

“I believe I know what you mean,” replied Richard, “and I shall come to it presently. If any one was silly, it was not you.

“I did not sell Amalgamated Electric on Wednesday, and on Thursday a doubt about the increased dividend began to be circulated. The stock, nevertheless, after a forenoon of weakness, rallied. Moreover, a check for my first dividend came from the Pollyopolis Heat, Light, Power, Paving, Pressing, and Packing Company.

“‘What a number of things it does’! exclaimed Ethel, when I showed her the company’s check.

“‘Yes,’ I replied, and quoted Browning to her: ‘Twenty-nine distinct damnations. One sure if the other fails.’ Beverly’s mother has a lot of it.’

“But Ethel did not smile. ‘Richard,’ she said, ‘I do wish you had more investments with ordinary simple names, like New York and New Haven, or Chicago and Northwestern.’ And when I told her that I thought this was really unreasonable, she was firm. ‘Yes,’ she replied, ‘I don’t like the names—not most of them, at least. Dutchess and Columbia Traction sounds pretty well; and besides that, of course one knows how successful these electric railways are. But take the Standard Egg Trust, and the Patent Pasteurised Infant Rubber Feeder Company.’

“ ‘Why Ethel!’ I exclaimed, ‘those are both based upon great inventions, Mr. Beverly—’”

“ ‘But she interrupted me earnestly. ‘I know about those inventions, Richard, for I have procured the prospectuses. And I wish that I could have told you my own feeling about them before you bought any of the stock.’”

“ ‘I do not think you can fully have taken it in, Ethel.’”

“ ‘I trust that it may not have fully taken you in,’ she replied. ‘Have you noticed what those stocks are selling for at present’ ?”

“ ‘Of course I had noticed this. I had paid 63 for Standard Egg, and it was now 48, while 11 was the price of Patent Pasteurized Feeder, for which I had paid 20. But this, Mr. Beverly assured me, was a normal and even healthy course for a new stock. ‘Had they gone up too soon and too high,’ he explained, ‘I should have suspected some crooked manipulation and advised selling at once. But this indicates a healthy absorption preliminary to a natural rise. I should not dream of letting mother part with hers.’”

“ ‘The basis of Standard Egg was not only a monopoly of all the hens in the United States, but a machine called a Separator, for telling the age and state of an egg by means of immersion in water. Perfectly good eggs sank fast and passed out through one distributor; fairly nice eggs did not reach the

bottom, and were drawn off through another sluice, and so on. This saved the wages of the egg twirlers, whose method of candling eggs, as it was called, was far less rapid than the Separator. And when I learned that one house in St. Louis alone twirled 50,000 eggs in a day, the possible profits of the Egg Trust became clear to me. But they were not so clear to Ethel. She said that you could not monopolise hens. That they would always be laying eggs and putting it in the power of competitors to hatch them by incubators. Nor did she have confidence in the Pasteurised Feeder. 'Even if you get the parents to adopt it,' she said, 'you cannot get the children. If they do not like the taste of the milk as it comes out of the bottle through the Feeder, they will simply not take it.'

" 'Well,' I answered, 'old Mrs. Beverly is holding on to hers.'

" When I said this, Ethel sat with her mouth tight. Then she opened it and said: 'I hate that woman.'

" 'Hate her? Why you have never so much as laid eyes on her.'

" 'That is not at all necessary. I consider it indecent for a grey-haired woman with grandchildren to be speculating in the stock market every week like a regular bull or bear.'

" Every point in this outburst of Ethel's seemed to me so unwarrantable that I was quite dazed. I sat

looking at her, and her eyes filled with tears. 'Oh Richard'! she exclaimed, 'she will ruin you, and I hate her'!

" 'My dear Ethel,' I replied, 'she will not. And only see how you are making it all up out of your head. You have never seen her, but you speak of her as a grey-haired grandmother.'

'She must be, Richard. You have told me that Mr. Beverly is a married man and about forty-five. No doubt he has older sisters and brothers. But if he has not, his mother can hardly be less than sixty-five, and he has probably been married for several years. He might easily have a daughter coming out next winter, and a son at Harvard or Yale; and if their grandmother's hair is not grey, that is quite as unnatural as her speculating in this way at her age. She must be a very unlady-like person.'

"Ethel, I saw, was excited. Therefore I made no more point of her theories concerning the appearance and family circle of old Mrs. Beverly. But in justice to myself I felt obliged to remind her, first, that I was investing, not speculating, and second, that it was Mr. Beverly's advice I was following, and not that of his mother. 'Had he not spoken of her,' I said, 'I should have remained unaware of her existence.'

" 'She is at the bottom of it all the same,' said Ethel. 'Everything you have bought has been because she bought it.'

" 'That is not quite the right way to put it,' I re-

plied. 'I was willing to buy these securities because Mr. Beverly thought so highly of them that he felt justified in—'

" 'There is no use,' interrupted Ethel, 'in our going round this circle as if we were a pair of squirrels. I do not ask you to hate that woman for my sake, but I cannot change my own feeling. Do you remember, Richard, about the City of Philippi Sewer Bonds? You did not want to buy them at first. You told me yourself that you thought new towns in Texas were apt to buzz suddenly and then die because all the people hurried away to some newer town and left the houses and stores standing empty. But Mr. Beverly's mother got some, and all your hesitation fled. And now I see that the Gulf, Galveston, and Little Rock is going to build a branch that may make Philippi a perfectly unnecessary town. If you sold these bonds to-day, how much would you lose?'

'I did not enjoy telling Ethel how much, but I had to. 'Only fifteen hundred dollars' I said.

'More than double your whole year's salary,' said Ethel. 'Well, I hope his mother will lose a great deal more than that.'

"The change of May into June, and the change of June into July, did not mellow Ethel's bitter feelings. I remember the day after Petunias defaulted on their interest, that she exclaimed, 'I hope I shall never meet her'! We always called Mr. Beverly's mother 'she' now. 'For if I were to meet her,'

continued Ethel, 'I feel I should say something that I should regret. Oh, Richard, I suppose we shall have to take cheaper apartments!'

"I put a cheerful and even jocular face on the matter, for I could not bear to see Ethel so depressed. But it was hard work for me. Some few of my investments were evidently good; but it always seemed as if it was into these that I had happened to put not much money, while the bulk of my fortune was entangled in the others. Besides the usual mid-Summer faintness that overtakes the stock market, my own specialties were a good deal more than faint. On the 20th of August I took the afternoon train to spend my two weeks' holiday at Lenox; and during much of the journey I gazed at the Wall Street edition of the afternoon paper that I had purchased as I came through the Grand Central Station. Ethel and I read it in the evening.

"'I wonder what she's buying now?' said Ethel, vindictively.

"'Well, I can't help feeling sorry for her,' I answered, with as much of a smile as I could produce.

"'That is so unnecessary, Richard! She can easily afford to gratify her gambling instinct.'

"'There you go, Ethel, inventing millions for her just as you invented grandchildren.'

"'Not at all. Unless she constantly had money lying idle, she could not take these continued plunges. She is an old woman with few expenses, and she lives well within her income. You would hear of

her entertaining if it was otherwise. So instead of conservatively investing her surplus, she makes ducks and drakes of it in her son's office. Is he at Hyde Park now?' Hyde Park was where the old Beverly country seat had always been.

"'No,' I answered. 'He went to Europe early last month.'

"'Very likely he took her with him. She is probably at Monte Carlo.'

"'Scarcely in August, I fancy. And I'll tell you what, Ethel. I have been counting it up. She has lost three thousand dollars in the Standard Egg alone. It takes a good deal of surplus to stand that.'

"'Serve her right,' said Ethel. 'And I would say so to her face.'

"September brought freshness to the stock market, but not to me. Mr. Beverly, like the well-to-do man that he was, remained away in Europe until October should require his presence as a guiding hand in the office. Thus was I left without his buoyant consolation in the face of my investments.

"Petunias were being adjusted on a four per cent basis; Dutchess and Columbia Traction was holding its own; I could not complain of Amalgamated Electric, though it was now lower than when I had bought it, while had I sold it on that Wednesday in May when Ethel begged me, before the increased dividend turned out a mistake, I should have made money. But Philippi Sewers were threatened; Pas-

teurised Feeders had been numb since June; Pollyopolis Heat, Light, Power, Paving, Pressing, and Packing was going to pass its quarterly dividend; and Standard Egg had gone down from 63 to 7 1-8. My hundred thousand dollars on paper now was worth in reality about thirty-seven thousand.

"I must say now, and I shall never forget, that Ethel during these gloomy weeks behaved much better than I did. The greyer the outlook became, the more words of hope and sense she seemed to find. She reminded me that, after all, my Uncle Godfrey's legacy had been a thing unlooked for, something out of my scheme of life; that I had my youth, my salary, and my writing; and that she would wait till she was as old as Mr. Beverly's mother.

"It was the thought of that lady which brought from Ethel the only note of complaint she uttered in my presence during that whole dreary month.

"We were spending Sunday with a house party at Hyde Park; and driving to church we passed an avenue gate with a lodge. 'Rockhurst, sir' said the coachman. 'Whose place?' I inquired. 'The old Beverly place, sir.' Ethel heard him tell me this; and as we went on, we saw a carriage and pair coming down the avenue toward the gate with that look which horses always seem to have when they are taking the family to church on Sunday morning.

"'If I see her,' said Ethel to me as we entered the door, 'I shall be unable to say my prayers.'

"But only young people came into the Beverly pew, and Ethel said her prayers and also sang the hymns and chants very sweetly.

"After the service, we strolled together in the old and lovely graveyard before starting homeward. We had told them that we should prefer to walk back. The day was beautiful, and one could see a little blue piece of the river, sparkling.

"'Here is where they are all buried,' said Ethel, and we paused before brown old headstones with Beverly upon them. 'Died 1750; died 1767,' continued Ethel, reading the names and inscriptions. 'I think one doesn't mind the idea of lying in such a place as this.

"Some of the young people in the pew now came along the path. 'The grandchildren' said Ethel. 'She is probably too old to come to church. Or she is in Europe.'

"The young people had brought a basket with flowers from their place, and now laid them over several of the grassy mounds. 'Give me some of yours,' said one to the other, presently; 'I've not enough for grandmother's.'

"Ethel took me rather sharply by the arm. 'Did you hear that?' she asked.

"'It can't be she, you know,' said I. 'He would have come back from Europe.'

"But we found it out at lunch. It was she, and she had been dead for fifteen years.

"Ethel and I talked it over in the train going

to town on Monday morning. We had by that time grown calmer. 'If it is not false pretences,' said she, 'and you cannot sue him for damages, and if it is not stealing or something, and you cannot put him in prison, what are you going to do to him, Richard?'

"As this was a question which I had frequently asked myself during the night, having found no satisfactory answer to it, I said: 'What would you do in my place, Ethel?' But Ethel knew.

"'I should find out when he sails, and meet his steamer with a cow-hide.'

"'Then he would sue me for damages.'

"'That would be nothing, if you got a few good cuts in on him.'

"'Ethel,' I said, 'please follow me carefully. I should like dearly to cow-hide him, and for the sake of argument we will consider it done. Then comes the law suit. Then I get up and say that I beat him because he made me buy Standard Egg at 63 by telling me that his mother had some, when really the old lady had been dead for fifteen years. When I think of it in this way, I do not feel'—

"'I know,' interrupted Ethel, 'you are afraid of ridicule. All men are.'

Had Ethel insisted, I believe that I should have cow-hided Mr. Beverly for her sake. But before his return, our destinies were brightened. Copper had been found near Ethel's waste lands in Michigan, and the family business man was able to sell

her property for two hundred thousand dollars. He did this so promptly that I ventured to ask him if delay might not have brought a greater price. 'Well,' he said, 'I don't know. You must seize these things. Blake and Beverly might have got tired waiting.'

"'Blake and Beverly'! I exclaimed. 'So they made the purchase. Is Mr. Beverly back?'

"'Just back. To tell the truth I don't believe they're finding so much copper as they hoped.'

"This turned out to be true. And I am not sure that the business man had not known it all the while. 'We looked over the property pretty thoroughly at time of the Tamarack excitement,' he said. And in a few days more, in fact, it was generally known that this land had returned to its old state of not quite paying the taxes.

"Then I paid my visit to Mr. Beverly, but with no cow-hide. 'Mr. Beverly,' said I, 'I want to announce to you my engagement to Miss Ethel Lansing, whose Michigan copper land you have lately acquired. I hope that you bought some for your mother.'

"Those," concluded Mr. Richard Field, "are the circumstances attending my engagement which I felt might interest you. And now Ethel, tell your story, if they'll listen."

"Richard," said Ethel, "that is the story I was going to tell."

* * * * *

"Before any one says anything," commanded Mrs. Goddard, "will somebody please imitate the darkey of the Broken Story and put a log on the fire?"

At the behest three men rose, with a resulting confusion, a clatter of falling poker, tongs, and shovel, and a start backward by Mrs. Hexamer, one of the dowagers, which knocked over the Japanese screen she had drawn up behind her fat and bejetted shoulders to protect them from the draught. Although the screen was seized by a man, it had already succeeded in displacing from the corner of a picture frame on the wall above, a Mexican peon's hat—an object steeple-crowned, betasselled, of many colours, which fell with a rakish slant directly upon the summit of Mrs. Hexamer's own waving chestnut pompadour. "Bless me!" cried the lady, uttering a well-bred little scream, and putting up, to the salvation of her maid's handiwork, a pair of exquisite white hands displaying rings familiar at the *tables d'hôte* of two continents. "This hat is the one I brought you, on the return from my last journey to Mexico—and a pretty penny they made me pay to get it, and my drawn-work, and opals, through that wretched little custom house on the border—the sort of experience that always impresses on us how much better it is to buy our souvenirs of travel in the shops at home."

"There is another sort of an experience of yours, Geneviève," answered her hostess, seizing an oppor-

tunity deftly presented, "of which I always hoped you might some day be brought to reveal the true inwardness. I mean the occasion of that interrupted visit to your husband's maguey plantations when you took out with the party in your private car—well, call her Mabel Glynn—the prettiest girl of the year, nursed her through some sort of a fever in a little wayside inn, and brought her home engaged to the man whom she afterward married, and whom it was known she had refused at least twice during the season before."

"How delicious!" exclaimed a girl, straightening herself up to listen.

"You girls always enjoy the idea of ante-nuptial discipline of men," said a man.

"Poor children! It is their golden hour for that sort of thing, as no one knows better than you, Geneviève," said a spinster.

"Yes," said Mrs. Goddard. "You see you have the reputation of having made many matches in the course of the series of expeditions by yacht and car, when you act Fairy Godmother and whisk young people off to all the pleasant places to be discovered."

"My husband and I find our best enjoyment in borrowing other people's children to play with, since we have none of our own" responded the Fairy Godmother, evasively.

"But the truth about 'Mabel Glynn's' affair—what better time to divulge it?" persisted Mrs. God-

dard. "Everybody knew she was infatuated with some wild scapegrace of a young Englishman—name forgotten, if I ever heard it—whom she had met at her brother's ranch in Colorado, that she was bent on marrying, to the dismay of her guardians—that the man was supposed to have been killed in a railway accident, that spring you carried her off to Mexico—and that although the poor girl made an excellent wife to Lovering Carr for a few years, she is now dead, and her husband is living permanently abroad.

"After all," said Mrs. Hexamer, sighing as she shook off her reverie, "who is there left to know or care? Poor 'Mabel's' husband is a wanderer in foreign parts, and has long since ceased to write to me. . . . However, if you like, I'll tell you the story. You may call it THE FAIRY GOD-MOTHER'S STORY, if you please, as all of the other stories have had names."

THE FAIRY GODMOTHER'S STORY

“I WISH I could make the rest of you see as I do, by merely looking into that bed of hickory coals, the after glow of a Mexican sunset in a wide sky arching over lonely grey plains, and lonelier grey mountains—behind us, stretching far away, the shining lines of steel, along which we had thundered for so many hot and weary hours—the delicious cool of evening falling—in the ragged grass by a wayside station called Fonseca an old peon woman under her blue rebosa, squatted by a tiny fire, serving frijoles to a ring of hungry cargadores, just in from a twenty mile tramp from the hills carrying huge piles of firewood to supply the little adobe city near at hand. One of these cargadores I can see distinctly, still—”

“I beg your pardon,” interrupted one of the listeners. “But what, exactly, are cargadores?”

“Native porters of everything from pulque in a pig-skin to a parlour-organ,” answered Mrs. Hexamer. “As I said, one figure of the group impressed itself immediately and strongly upon me,” went on Mrs. Hexamer. It was that of a tall, dark, smooth-shaven, sinewy young man, wearing the usual crimson serape and high-crowned hat, a mountain of branches and twigs towering upon his shoulders, his pose against the pink of the evening sky the very

embodiment of manly grace and vigour. I describe him to you, because of what came afterward—I only, of all our party, happened to be out on the rear platform, taking observations, at the time. The rest of them were in their state-rooms, tidying for dinner, trying for the twentieth time to get rid of the coating of alkali dust that had sifted through the ventilators and windows. When Mabel Glynn came out of her stateroom presently, I called her to look at the picturesque scene, and especially at the muscular development of the young man I had singled out.

“ We were alone together, but for the flagman who was hurrying off, having just swung himself over the gate of the platform after hanging out his red lights; and at that moment, the train was again in motion, running slowly through a double line of native huts, from which women, boys and children issued in throngs to beset our progress with the usual cry for small silver. What ailed Mabel I could not imagine, but she uttered a plaintive little cry and, as I turned, threw herself into my arms. I took her inside, put her upon the sofa, sent my maid for salts and eau-de-cologne and all the rest of it, she vehemently declaring it was nothing but the effect of that roasting afternoon. As the child was pale and shaky, I insisted upon her not coming to dinner with our racketing little party, to which she readily consented, only bargaining that the maid should not bother her with food.

“ ‘ You are sure—quite sure that we mayn’t tempt

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you with a tiny morsel or two?' I asked, as we reluctantly filed away to the dining compartment, leaving her in the gathering darkness of the sitting room. But Mabel shook her head. In vain my husband urged a glass of champagne, and a bit of chicken. She wanted nothing, nobody, begged that the lights should not be lit, that she might have a perfectly quiet half hour in which to recover from her teasing little headache.

"We did as the girl asked, giving orders to the servants not to go near that end of the car. In the brief time that ensued between our soup and coffee, Mabel Glynn had an experience that coloured the whole remainder of her short life, poor child, and that, I honestly believe, sent her to her grave with a heartache that nothing could remove. Little did we, chaffing and trifling over the dainty dishes of our travellers' menu, dream that but the length of a corridor and a couple of staterooms away from us, our pretty joyous guest was being brought face to face with the grim reality of a tragedy in which the chief actor was the man she had loved with all the passion of her girlish heart."

"Good gracious"! exclaimed a girl, hysterically, and then, a little ashamed of her emotion, tried to sit back, so that the firelight should not play upon her face.

Then, as the story teller paused, she said, "I beg your pardon, dearest Mrs. Hexamer, "I promise not to do it again."

"No matter," said the Fairy Godmother, who, at heart, was not sorry for this chance to steady her voice and marshal her recollections. "I shall have to go back, here, to tell you that Mabel's people had given me a hint of the preoccupied state of her affections, assuring me, however, that the young man, after squandering and gambling away his own fortune and everything else he could lay hands upon in the East, and becoming the hero of a number of dashing adventures that had endeared him to the Western neighbourhood where Miss Glynn had the misfortune to meet him, had suddenly dropped out of the knowledge of his acquaintances in both sections of the country. For six or eight months, the girl who considered herself pledged to him wherever and whenever he might claim her, had gone through all the agonies of hope deferred concerning him. Just before I invited her to accompany us on the journey, she had announced to her friends her final resolution to give up her unworthy lover, and try to live down the wrecked years of her young life which he had caused."

"The wretch!" said some one.

"Mabel Glynn could no more help loving and trusting, than a flower can help opening to the sun," said Mrs. Hexamer. "And now for her story of what happened during that interval when she was left alone in the rear of our good car, Catawissa. For a time after we ran out of the station where the wood-carriers were having their supper, Mabel lay

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upon the couch on which I had ensconced her, with both hands clasped over her eyes, her brain whirling in confusion, her heart beating violently. In the young cargadore whom I had singled out for his beauty and extraordinary look of strength, she had recognised her recreant lover, whom, for convenience sake, we will call James Monteith, although neither of those names was given to him in baptism, or inherited from his forbears. She knew him instantly—with certainty. But he did not see her, standing as she did, behind me, a little back in the doorway of the car.

“It was not only a thrill of unexpected meeting, and of Monteith's strange disguise that had overcome her. It was because she had discerned in the face and figure so familiar to her in the fond companionship of their past betrothal, a consciousness of personal danger from which he was straining every nerve to free himself.

“What was he doing there, among those low-born Indians, human beasts of burden, living a life of incredible toil and hardship, apparently one of themselves, but to her keen glance clearly on the watch for immediate escape from his degraded situation, she could not divine. When last heard from, he had been said to be getting out upon a mining venture in Arizona. Unknown to her family, she had even received from him a few lines of farewell, telling her that in his present enterprise he was making a final bid for the fortune and respectability that, so

far in life, had eluded him; and, at the same time, asking her to forget one who had crossed her path only to give her sorrow. This letter she had treasured for more than eight months, and had destroyed only upon setting out upon our long journey. The tragedy of his present predicament was what Mabel's reason told her might have been expected—an episode in keeping with Montieth's reckless career. A thousand times, friends had warned her that he must some day come to open grief and shame. She knew him to be selfish, unprincipled, dissipated, not for one moment to be trusted—and his neglectful treatment of her had well-nigh broken her heart. But at the first glimpse of him, in this extremity, at the world's mercy as she believed, her love had sprung up again in her breast like a flowing fountain, washing all out the past. Her mad impulse had been to leap from the car, to offer him her help, if needs were to offer to share whatever peril or distress might be his portion. Then, conventionality, like a wall of steel, had closed her in, and she remained spellbound, still as a statue—gazing—gazing—until the train moved off.

“Met again—parted again—and under such circumstances! The poor child had summoned all her courage to conceal her despair from us, and not until we left her, did she dare give rein to her wild emotion. A torrent of sobbing came at last, to her relief. The porter, as usual, when we went out of our sitting-room to meals, had come in to dust and air it;

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but upon receiving orders from my husband to leave Miss Glynn undisturbed, had contented himself with lighting a single gas-jet near the rear door, and giving chairs and tables a few passes with his inevitable dust-cloth. After Mabel had indulged in what women technically call 'a good cry,' her instinct was, of course, to get rid of the traces of it. She, accordingly, proceeded to open the car door, intending to sit, as was her custom, upon a camp stool on the observation platform, trusting to the cool night air to soothe and refresh her. We were running smoothly over an excellent road-bed and, as she stepped out into the darkness, she saw clinging to the railing of the steel gateway at one side, a man's crouching form. Taking him to be one of the numerous friendly peons, who, in those parts, swarm around the passenger train, stealing rides and annexing from the proprietors of special cars and their guests, all manner of trifling gifts, from cigarettes and half worn neckties to fruit and bonbons, she started slightly, but without consciousness of alarm.

" 'You ought to be ashamed of yourself,' she said, in Spanish, rebukingly, 'but as we can't be far from the next station, rather than run this risk, you may get over on the platform until we slow up.'

" Mabel expected to hear murmured in return a soft expression of thanks, to see the usual flash of white teeth and the gleam of merry dark eyes with which those happy-go-lucky Indian vagabonds take all the goods the gods provide them. It was part of

the strange dream she had been dreaming, to hear, instead, her own name uttered in a low agitated voice. At once, the peon vaulted across the boundary between them, and the light of the gas within the car, fell full upon the face of—James Montieth.

“‘You, *you?*’ he said, brokenly. ‘What an extraordinary turn of Fate. Tell me quickly, are we likely to be disturbed by any of your friends?’

“‘They are all at dinner at the other end of the car,’ she faltered, trembling in every limb, but striving for self control. ‘I think they are not likely to finish till after we pass the next station, since I heard the porter say it is there we shall take in the fresh fruit for the dessert.’

“‘Good,’ he said grimly. ‘I saw their table laid for dinner, and took the chance of having this ride unobserved. God knows that I never dreamed that you are one of the party I envied for their ease and luxury, still more for their food and drink. Do you know, I hadn’t a centavo to pay the price asked by the old crone for her frijoles back yonder at Fonseca and so had to pretend that I didn’t want ’em. But I’m starving, to tell the truth, so empty and dizzy that I could hardly hang on to this rail.’

“‘Wait—wait!’ she said. ‘Let me think.’

Rapidly she ran inside, closing the door between them and went back to her old place on the couch, rang up the porter, and told him that, feeling ever so much better, she should like a nice plate full of dinner brought as quickly as he could prepare it. The por-

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ter, like everybody else upon the car, was at the feet of this lovely and gracious creature, so in a few moments he was back again, carrying a generous provision of dainties, with the glass of champagne which my husband had insisted should accompany it.

“ ‘Now, Manuel, I have all I want, and more,’ she said, smiling upon her dusky adorer, and trying to conceal the odd catch in her voice. ‘Don’t come until I ring for you, please, and thank you very much.’

“ Manuel stepped off as proudly as if a queen had spoken to him and, when the coast was again clear, Mabel carried the tray out upon the platform where Montieth received it with the snatch of a hungry wolf. Until he had devoured the chief part of the food, and drank both wine and water served with it, he did not attempt to speak to her, although they sat together almost touching, upon two stools. The train raced on through the night and only the stars looked at this strange reunion of two people who had many a time sworn to be all in all to each other, while breath might be in their bodies. Eagerly Mabel waited till he was ready to speak, and when he could eat no more, Montieth—after reconnoitering—carried the tray inside, and set it upon a table, returning like a giant refreshed, to sit again beside her.

“ ‘Poor little girl! Hard lines for you to get the credit of an appetite like mine,’ he said, with a hard sort of laugh. ‘But there’s no help for it, worse luck! How this meal has put new life in me! Now, see

here,' he added, looking around him at the landmarks of their route. 'I've got about ten minutes more before we come into the next station, at which point I propose to climb up on the top of your car and take a snooze for another twenty miles or so, for I'm as dead beat for sleep as I was for food. While you're sleeping the sleep of the rich and virtuous, my dear, try to forget that up on the bare boards above you is a fellow who did his best to spoil your life and, for that and all his sins, is getting paid to the bottom dollar, by ill-luck."

" 'Do you think that will comfort me?' she said, her heart swelling, the tears ready to overflow again. 'Won't you let me do something to help you—something to show that I've still trust in you, and would give my life to make yours a different one?'

" 'I believe you would, my dear,' he said, a softer look for the first time coming into his eyes. 'But its no use, all you could do, would be water spilled upon the ground, not to be gathered up again; and you're well rid of me. But if you can't reform me, Mabel, you can perhaps spare enough money to get me out of the tightest place I ever tried to squeeze through. In two words, I'm flying for my life; and, as I said, I haven't a cent to bless myself. About twelve o'clock to-night, I mean to drop off this train, and make my way across the mountains to a place I know of where there's some one who will look out for me, until I can get up with the States again."

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“ ‘Oh! how *thankful* I am!’ she cried, fervently, ‘that I cashed that cheque in New Orleans, and got such a lot of Mexican money. It’s not really so much, Jim—not quite a hundred dollars of our money—but it may help you out.’”

“Montieth’s eyes glittered with triumph as she put her fingers into the gold meshed bag hanging by chains to her waist, extracting its contents, which she laid within his eager hand.

“ ‘You’ve saved me, little girl!’ he said, exultingly. ‘With this cash in pocket, I’m not afraid of these slow-coach dagoes catching up with me. Be sure, if I live, your money will come back to you some day. And I’ll promise it’ll be without a word of explanation; nothing to remind you of me any more than if it came out of the grave.’”

“ ‘Don’t say that—don’t cut me off from all happiness’ she begged; but he was obdurate.

“ ‘This is the last time, Mabel, the very last time, I swear, that I cross your path on earth’ was what he said. Poor child, how often in her delirium in the fever through which I nursed her she would repeat these words!”

“My dear Mrs. Hexamer,” said the old bachelor, “when we asked for a leaf from your experience, we looked for something lively, sparkling, on the lines of your usual animated conversation. Something a little spiteful, kind at heart, shrewd, pungent and exhilarating. Instead, you are reducing your hearers to the verge of tears. Look at all the

women. Several seem on the point of deliquescence. Of the men, I myself, own to most lugubrious feelings."

"That's not fair," interposed Mrs. Goddard, in a vexed tone. "Please, good people, pay no sort of attention to the comments of a cynical old bachelor, and, Geneviève, do you go on with your story. We all want to know what Montieth had done to get himself into such a scrape, and how that poor devoted girl contrived to get him out of it."

"Nevertheless, I've had a needful jog," answered Mrs. Hexamer. "I have no right to let my own feelings and partisanship influence the spirits of the party. What I know came to me partly in the disclosures made by Mabel Glynn during her illness afterward, partly in a written statement which she prepared for me on her recovery, asking me to show it to one other of our party who might feel himself entitled to know the true cause of her collapse following this strange adventure. Perhaps you will not be as much surprised as she was on hearing it from her lover's lips, that, after fraternising for some time past with a very low class of Mexicans, he had got into a drinking bout with one of them, ending in a fight with knives, in which he had killed his adversary. This had happened in the evening of the day before Montieth had boarded our train as a stowaway. The death of the peon who had previously been his friend and benefactor, com-

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pletely sobered him. When he knelt over the body trying vainly to bring it back to life, the idea flashed into his mind to conceal his own share in the tragedy and at the same time drop forever out of his previous place in existence, by changing clothes with the dead man upon whose person he left certain papers of identification, and what little money he possessed. After doing this—they were near by a railway town named Diaz,—he dragged the body over to the track, and left it there.

“ Flying from the place of doom, Montieth made his way up to a woodman's camp on the mountain side, where a train of cargadores were just about to set out with their burden of high-piled fagots for the city of Fonseca in a valley twenty miles away. Asking for employment from the leader of the gang, Montieth obtained it, and joined the procession down the rough, burning mountain path, carrying his unaccustomed load. A dreadful feature of this experience was that the simple and trustful natives who were his mates, seemed instinctively to avoid him. When it was time for them to eat their midday meal, they did so apart from him, and the weight of shame and misery in his breast kept him from begging the food for which he was famishing.

“ At last, the long terrible day wore to its end, and the approach of our train just as the cargadores came to a halt around the frijole woman at Fonseca station gave Montieth the opportunity he coveted. It was not the first time he had helped himself to a

ride between stations, or climbed to the roof of a car for refuge after nightfall. His aim, as he had told Mabel, was to make his way to a certain point on the other side of the mountains, where he could be sure of a shelter, and of help to get out of Mexico. What followed, we all know.

“These were the bare outlines of the tale hurriedly told to Mabel Glynn by her lover that March night in the desert, as they rushed onward through the mild pure air, under stars shining as softly as with us in the Northern midsummer. Their isolation, the strange jumble of the kaleidoscope of Fate which had thrown them thus together, above all, her womanly pity for his desperate straits, stirred her to an impulse of intense feeling. Forgetting or ignoring consequence, she hardly waited till he had ceased to speak, before bursting into a passionate appeal to him to let her share his lot. She reminded him that she was of age, mistress of her own considerable fortune, and that he had always had her heart. She proposed to him, poor girl, to make his way to a town over the border, wait for her there, and that then, as soon as she could conveniently join him, she would marry him and joyfully accept whatever risk it might entail. To comfort him, to devote her life to soothing and shaping his, seemed to her the highest mission imaginable, and his refusal to accept her sacrifice would be worse than anything she might be called upon to bear in making it.

“Poor Mabel! they were nearing the spot where

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they must part, and her whole soul went into her prayer. To his credit be it said, Montieth, for once, was thoroughly touched and softened. His face worked, his eyes filled with tears. He tried to answer, but could not. He knelt at her feet, lifted the hem of her skirt and kissed it, but did not offer so much as to touch her finger-tips. While she awaited his answer, in half-ashamed, palpitating silence, the brakes began to tell upon their speed. . . . As the train slackened, he spoke, and spoke desperately, telling her the fatal news that the 'friend' to whom he was trying to push his way was his wife—a beautiful Indian girl, whom he had married to be a comrade and caretaker in his wild wanderings, just after his final renunciation of all claim to Mabel's hand!

"This was her coup-de-grace! All else she could have borne, but this pierced her like a merciful sword. There was no time for Montieth to watch its effect on her, since the train was stopping. He sprang lightly upon the gate rail, swung himself onto the roof of the car and disappeared. She thought she heard a muttered 'Good bye, darling,' but could not be sure. And that was the last she ever saw of James Montieth!

"The girl staggered dumbfounded back into the car, hardly knowing, for the surging of blood into her brain, what had befallen her—but conscious of a great blank that nothing could ever fill. Fortunately, in a sense, she fainted, and the arms opened

to receive her were those of Lovering Carr. He had been restless and anxious all during our dinner and, at the earliest moment, stole away to look after the girl who was all the world to him——”

“Oh! the poor dear!” exclaimed a girl.

“No comments yet,” ordered somebody. “Let us hear the rest of what Mrs. Hexamer has to tell.”

“The ‘rest’ is obvious,” said Mrs. Hexamer. “When I came out, a moment later, from the dining-room, I found Mabel lying on the couch in a dead faint—Carr kneeling beside her, almost out of his wits with alarm. I and my maid, a competent good soul, took the child in hand, had her carried into her stateroom, and worked over her for a tiresome time before she came back to consciousness. I sat by her all that night, and by morning, I saw that it was indispensable to remove her from the train, and take possession of all the available rooms of an inn in a little mountain town where I knew there was a good American doctor in residence, and where the air and views were glorious. Mabel did not ‘come to herself’ in the usual way. For a while we believed her brain to be permanently affected. The doctor, although a clever young fellow, was plainly disconcerted by the mystery in the case. Of course none of us could have dreamed the truth of her strange adventure. To all appearances, the blow, whatever it might be, had fallen upon her out of a clear sky. I, however, and my maid, who kept watch alternately, by the sick bed, soon began to gather from her talk

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in the wanderings of fever, that something altogether out of the common had occurred during the time she had been left alone. And yet what could it be? What, in reason, could have befallen her? It was Lovering Carr (haggard and sleepless during the first access of her fever, haunting the corridor outside our rooms in the hotel) who gave me the first definite clue. In the second morning after our hurried transfer from the car to the little inn on the mountain crest, Mr. Carr brought me a local journal published at Diaz, from which he translated an item under the head of local news. It was dated the day before, and stated that the body of a man, apparently an American from his dress and belongings, had just been found in a mutilated condition upon the railway track near Diaz; and that upon examination, by the authorities, of the papers about his person, he had been decided to be a certain James Montieth, leader of a band of outlaws who for some months past had terrorised their neighbourhood. But a fortnight since, Montieth's men—all native Mexicans—had raided a wagon train and killed two drivers. It was a source of great relief to their community that the daring fellow had in some way come to this tragic ending, since, without his leadership, the band of robbers would undoubtedly fall apart. The only person likely in any way to be feared as Montieth's successor was his second in command, a man called José Alvarez, and he was known to have taken flight, having been traced in the disguise of a wood carrier

over the mountain to Fonseca, where he undoubtedly boarded a train south-bound, and must subsequently have left it unknown to the train hands, to escape in safety to the mountains.

“‘And you think, Mr. Carr—?’ I began, after reading the significant paragraph to its close.

“‘I think this brute of an Alvarez,’ he interrupted me passionately (only using much stronger language than I care to repeat) ‘in some way, got access to your car, ate the food prepared for the poor girl, terrified her into silence, and perhaps—that remains to be investigated—gave her some intimation of the fate of James Montieth. How he could have identified her as interested in Montieth, unless by ill-luck, Montieth may have carried a portrait of her with which Alvarez was familiar—I can’t for the life of me make out.’

“I took my husband into our confidence, and the three of us exhausted ourselves in speculation as to the truth of the case, but without much result. Lov-ering Carr did more. As soon as our invalid had passed the danger point in her illness, he absented himself for two or three days, went back to Diaz, made every possible enquiry, visited Montieth’s grave, but could get no farther in the search for facts. The riddle as far as Mabel was concerned was locked in the keeping of her clouded memory, and unless she should volunteer to speak to us of it, no one could hope to solve it.

“Slowly, very slowly, the child came back to her

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old place in our lives and interests. The spot I had fallen upon for this sojourn was a sort of sub-tropical eyrie among the hills, with peaks above and beyond us, glorious vistas of valleys at our feet and, immediately around the fonda, a plateau containing a lovely half-ruined garden, full of orange trees, and roses growing wild. To tell of Lovering Carr's work in preparing a nook of this Southern paradise for Mabel's use when she should be able to make her first appearance in the open air, would be a romance in itself. All the rest of our party had long since scattered—gone on to show-places, joined other travellers, or returned to the States. We, with our two servants, (the most handy helpful creatures,) alone remained. My husband, whom I had feared would perish of boredom in this savage wild, regained so much of his youthful vigour, slept so well, and above all digested so well, that he never made a moan. I never even heard an allusion to his clubs or the missing daily newspapers; and his temper throughout fairly entitled him to a place among the seraphim, hereafter. I must say that the continual society of a man as clever and tactful as Mr. Carr, was an immense gain to both of us; and Carr, fortunately, proved to be a chess-player, which disposed of the wakeful part of my good man's evenings.

“But, at all odd moments, Carr was out devising a sort of bower in which the convalescent might sit and look at that wonderful range of mountains melt-

ing in mists or bathed in sunshine. When Mabel first stepped into this enchanting niche among the orange flowers and jasmines, and realised that his loving care had arranged it for her, I saw her glance up at him with an expression that filled my chap-eron's soul with satisfaction. Indeed, I don't mind owning to you all that, had it been humanly possible, I could have jumped for joy."

"If one dared," ventured a listener with twinkling eyes, "one might even fancy that during Miss Glynn's convalescence, she had previously heard a good deal about Mr. Lovering Carr's perfections, from the same admirable and self-sacrificing chap-eron."

"A fair share," smiled the narrator. "Oh! if you knew how rejoiced I was to feel that somewhere out of the uncertainty of the future might be coming love and protection for the poor stricken creature—for before she was able to rejoin us she had told me the full truth! She had even scrawled it upon paper and, as I told you, begged me to communicate it to my husband and Mr. Carr, and I had done so."

"The only exaction made of her in return for her confidence, was to pledge us never to try to trace her former lover in his flight. She asked that, knowing the facts, we should one and all put them and Montieth like 'dead men, out of mind.' And from that day to this, so far as I know, no one of us has ever heard tale or tidings of James Montieth, except that her loan of money came back to Mabel in such a way

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that she could not, had she so desired, have found out its source.

“ Little by little, the light returned to Mabel's eyes, the pink into her cheeks, her little rosy mouth smiled oftener ; and little by little, during our remaining stay upon our flowery mountain shelf, Lovering Carr's devotion won her to gratitude and trust, and daily dependence. The sequel was inevitable. When we at last got back to New York, and I returned Mabel to the relatives who served as guardians—unsympathetic people, by the way, and not up to her level of refinement and cultivation—she did not long remain with them. One day in the autumn, Lovering Carr came to me and told me he had won the desire of his heart. Mabel married him shortly afterward ; and, being of the nomadic class by nature, he took her to Sicily for the winter. After this, they returned once or twice to America, to settle matters of business, but continued to live abroad. Strange as it may seem, I never saw her or her husband during their married life. When they were in this country, I was abroad, and vice-versa. I don't even know whether she was as happy as she deserved to be in recompense for the sharp trials of her earlier youth. The whole thing had become hazy in my recollections until Mrs. Goddard revived it here to-night. All I can positively state by way of finish to my story, is that Mrs. Lovering Carr died not many years after in the mountains of northern Italy where, I am told, Carr had created for her an idyllic country home.

He sent me a newspaper clipping, containing a notice of her death, without comment of his own. Since then, we have heard vaguely that he is travelling, no one seems to know where. And that, my long suffering hearers, must end my contribution to your evening's entertainment. It has made me horribly sad to rake up those old recollections, and to think how people come into one's life and go out of it, leaving scarcely a trace. I know I shan't sleep forty winks to-night. How I loved that girl! I wish that whoever put the log on the fire, and brought the peon's hat down on my head—now what is there bad enough for me to wish him? That he may carry my years and the burden of my memories——?”

“Add, madam, your courage and loyalty and humanity,” said the quiet gentleman, with an old fashioned bow, “and any one of us would gladly accept the penalty.”

* * * * *

“It's ten o'clock,” muttered the old gentleman, still wondering when the whiskey would come.

It was murmured below his breath, and therefore was unintelligible to any one, but in the moment's silence that invariably followed the completion of a tale, the slightest sound was enough to fix the general attention upon him, with fatal results.

“Oh, General, I see you have a story ready to tell,” cried the hostess, “and it's so good of you to be a volunteer, and not a conscript.”

“Me?” protested the unfortunate. “Hadn't an

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idea of opening my mouth." Then to himself, "Throat's too dry to talk, any way."

"Nonsense. You know you're rammed to the tonsils with stories of the war, General, and it will be sheer ill-nature if you don't tell us one," said one of the guests.

"Yes, do be an angel!" pleaded Mrs. Goddard.

"It's such a good preparation—sort of understudy for a future part," remarked Harold.

"Thank you, no," retorted the General. "I tried that once—and—well—"

"Tried what?" questioned some one.

"Being an angel."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, the General's story will explain, don't you see?" remarked Mrs. Goddard.

"Well, so it shall, and I'll call it 'THE ANGEL OF THE LORD'. It was years ago, when—well—when I still believed in angels—who were, strangely enough, always of a sex opposite to my own."

ANGEL OF THE LORD

I had just begun life, as a lawyer, at the small capital of my native southern State. My parental home was three counties distant. My father was a slaveholding planter, whom I honoured and loved; but we could not tolerate each other's politics, and I was trying to exist on my professional fees. Already I had a wide business acquaintance, but had neglected social relations, being unwilling to deny certain outlandish political notions, and almost as loath to confess them.

On a summer holiday, which fell, that year, at the end of the week, two fellow-boarders of mine, state-house clerks, went away at daylight for a day's fishing, leaving me out of their plans so glaringly that I smarted. Because I liked them so well, I wondered if I could not be revenged on them in some playful way that should make us better friends; but the actual impulse to do so came to me only very slowly and vaguely as I walked down street after breakfast to collect a fee from a client who kept a livery-stable.

Of course if I did anything it must be something that would reveal a frolicsome spirit of comradeship, my suppression of which hitherto, and not my equally suppressed politics, I believed to be the secret of my isolation. In college, where I had intended to leave all silly tricks behind me, my most successful pranks

had been played in female disguise, and even yet I had a lady's complexion and was as beardless as a child. Moreover I had still a trunk of woman's finery, which my professional dignity and my lack of any intimate acquaintance had prevented me from getting rid of, and now, in revolt against this dignity and isolation, I thought of that wardrobe. My two fellow-bachelors were notedly and abjectly afraid of women.

At the stable I failed to get any money; the suit I had won for its owner had been a rather barren one. However, a part of his booty was an old private coach built for those earlier days when carriage people still made extended journeys in their own equipages.

"I'll keep it on sale for you free of charge," he said, et-cetera.

"Which means," I replied, "you haven't any idea you can sell it."

"I can sell it, if any man alive can!" he replied.

I smiled the smile of a young lawyer, and asked if he could lend me, for half a day or so, a good span of horses.

He was mystified. "Why,—yes, I—I reckon I can."

"Then hitch up the coach and let me try it."

His eyes whitened with surprise, and he grew almost incensed. "What the devil are you going to find out by *trying* it? I—oh, the fact is I—this is a holiday, and I can't spare any one to drive it."

I was glad he could not; the man he would spare might know me, and I wanted the services of some total stranger both to me and the coach. I must find such a person, and everything else seemed to me easier than that. "If I send a driver for the thing," said I as I moved away, "you'll furnish the span, will you?"

Oh, yes, he would most cheerfully do that! But hardly had he spoken, when I privately decided to do without the conveyance entirely. I went back to my room and had an hour's quiet enjoyment getting myself up as a lady dressed for travel. For a woman I was not suspiciously, but only inspiringly, tall. In years I looked a refined and comfortable forty. My hands were not too big for a high-numbered pair of black lace mits, my waist was almost slender, my bosom was a success, and my feet, in gaiters of thin morocco, were well enough concealed to be no man's business. A little oil and a burnt match darkened my eyebrows, under a wee bonnet I wore a chignon, behind one ear hung a bunch of curls, and out of sight but not inaccessible, at the left of a modest bustle, snuggled my revolver. I managed my crinoline with feminine grace.

Leaving a note stuck in my bureau mirror to tell our landlady that an unexpected matter would keep me from the house an indefinite time, I got out at the front gate unobserved, and with a sweet dignity that almost put me in love with myself, walked away

beneath a bewitching parasol and veil, in the direction taken by the two sportsmen.

I knew, pretty accurately, where to find them. A few hundred paces put the town, and some open fields, at my back, and a few more, down a bushy lane or two, brought me where a dense wood overhung both sides of the narrow way, and the damp air was full of a smell of pennyroyal and creek sands. From here I proposed to saunter down through the woods to the creek, locate my fishermen, and draw them to me by cries of affright and distress. Between my moanings and clingings, my story, told through my veil, was to be that while on a journey in my own coach, some small part of its running-gear having broken, I had sent it on to be mended, and, through my dislike to a strange town, had been tempted to stray alone among the trees and wild-flowers, until my equipage should return for me; and that I had trodden on a snake and was bitten on the ankle. I would describe a harmless reptile, but insist I was poisoned; yet with wildly offended modesty I would refuse to show the wound, or to be carried back to the road, or to let either man leave me alone in the woods with the other while he ran for medical aid, or to drink their whiskey for a cure. On getting back to the road—on one foot, with the two bachelors for crutches—I would compel them to leave me there and to go to town in search of my coach and servants, trusting to my care their tackle and fish. Then

I would get myself and my spoils back to our dwelling as best I could, and, once there, adapt myself to whatever might happen. A holiday excuses much, yet even if this poor performance had come off successfully—but see what occurred instead.

Concealed behind some wild vines, I had shut my parasol and tossed the suffocating veil back on my bonnet to mop my face, when, some thirty yards down the road on the farther side, came stealthily into view a young negro and negress. They were in evident haste to cross unseen. The one in homespun gown and sunbonnet was ill shapen, with a face typically negroidal; shoeless, big-footed, bird-heeled, fan-toed and ragged; and would have been offensively ugly but for a redeeming grotesqueness made almost winsome by large amiable eyes and a certain fantastical intelligence. "She's a field-hand," was my thought.

The other, in hickory shirt, trousers and shoes, seemed ten years the younger and was shapely and handsome to a degree. Very oddly paired they were. "That boy," thought I, "is a house-servant, house-bred. They don't match; they're not of a feather; and yet I'd like to bet all I can raise that they're runaways."

They drew back among the bushes and stole up to a point opposite my covert, and I saw they were planning to cross into it. Presently, with a childish pretense of unconcern, one scanning the road town-

ward, the other the opposite way, they came, and were within five feet of me before they knew I was near. I shall never forget the horror that flashed white and black from the eyes in that sunbonnet, nor the gasp and snort with which its owner crashed off sidewise a dozen steps into the brush and as suddenly stopped, like a frightened heifer.

I spoke to the other, who gulped with consternation, too, but stood still. "Good-morning, boy."

"Good-mawnin', mist'ess," was the slow response. Now, really, I abhorred a negro. I had never seen—I don't know that I have ever yet seen—a group of them at work or at play that I did not groan for some way—some righteous way—by which the land might be purged of the whole ill-gotten horde. But here, in my silly disguise, confronted by this unmixed young African of mellow voice, graceful diffidence and refined self-regard—this slave so manifestly superior to myriads of our human swarm, fair or dark, in clearness of mind and in purity of spirit—my generalisations were utterly taken aback. The customary challenge, "Whose nigger are you?" did not rise quite to my lips; but while I endured a deferential scrutiny of soft eyes from bonnet to mits, I gave my head as winsome a tilt as I could and asked "What is your name?"

"Me?"

"Yes, you; what is it?"

"I'm name', eh—I'm name' Euonymus; yass 'm."

"Euon'—why, boy, where did your mother get that name for you?"

"Why, dass a Bi-ible na-ame, ain't it, mist'ess?" With the question came a look as if my negative would be a cruel disappointment.

"Oh, yes," I replied, and never found out whether, or not, Euonymus meant Onesimus. A few yards off, the grotesque figure in the flaring sun-bonnet gazed motionless through the tops of the bushes. I lifted my parasol that way. "Has she a Bible name, too?"

"Yass 'm."

I nerved myself for the shock. "What is her name?"

"Sarepta."

"Hmm! Howdy, Sarepta."

Sarepta brought chin and shoulder together and sniggered.

"Euonymus," I asked, "have you seen two young gentlemen fishing, anywhere hereabouts?"

The response came with a telltale alacrity. "Yass 'm, dey out 'pon a white san'-bah dess a couple hund'ed yahds up de creek."

"He's wild to be rid of me," thought I, and irrelevantly noticed that the black finger which eagerly pointed up the stream was as clean as my own. "Yes," I thought again, "and he and that girl monkey yonder were dodging those two men, in terror of discovery." With a smile that simulated mere curiosity I looked my slim informant over

once more from foot to head. I had never seen slavery so flattered, and at the same time so irrevocably condemned, in the person of the slave. All at once I said in my heart "I'll help him get away!" Then, noting again the absurd Sarepta, it came to me that to do this with any hope of success I must help both alike. "Euonymus, did you ever drive a lady's coach?"

"Me? no 'm, I neveh driv no lady's coach."

"Well, Euonymus, I'm travelling; travelling in my own coach."

"Yass 'm," replied Euonymus, and Sarepta's cautious step ventured around to the respondent.

"Now, my coach' is at a livery-stable in town, and I want a driver and a lady's maid."

"Yass 'm," said both.

"I greatly prefer free darkeys to slaves, because they can come with me as far as they please, and I don't have to be responsible for their return."

"Yass 'm," said Euonymus, and moved away from Sarepta's private nudge.

"Now, Euonymus, I judge by your being out here doing nothing at this time of day, that you are both free, you and your sister, are you not?"

"Sa'—Sarepta an' me? Eh, ye'—yass 'm, as you may say, in a manneh—yass 'm."

"She is your sister, is she not?"

"Yass 'm," put in Sarepta, with a happy grin, and Euonymus added, much more quietly, "Us full sisteh an' brotheh—in a manneh."

"Couldn't you drive my coach, Euonymus?"

"Who, me, mist'ess? Why, eh—o' co'se I kin drive *some*, but——" The soft, honest eyes of the speaker, wandering to Sarepta's, betrayed a conflict of affections and solitudes that made them handsomer than ever.

"There are more than two runaways," I silently guessed, "and the boy's debating whether to seize this chance for Sarepta's sake and leave the others behind, or to renounce it."

"You *kin* drive de coach," blurted the thick lips of Sarepta, "you knows you kin!" But this only helped the other to an opposite conclusion. "No, mist'ess," said Euonymus, "I ain't no ways fitt'n' fo' to drive a coach an' span fo' a lady lak you; no, 'm."

"Well, daddy's fitt'n'!" blurted the sunbonnet.

Euonymus flinched and gave Sarepta a glance of reproachful caution, but the betrayer would not be silenced. "Us kin go fetch him in th'ee shakes!" insisted Sarepta.

"Yass' 'm," said the warier diplomatist, "us kin go ax him."

I smiled kindly at the transparent stratagem. "No; let Sarepta go, and you stay till she comes back with your daddy."

The two exchanged gazes. "Go, fetch him," murmured Euonymus, "an' make has'e."

"Wait a moment," I interrupted. "Euonymus, you're a pretty good boy, are you not?"

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The runaway's head sank bashfully. "Why, mist'ess, I cayn't——"

"You is good," sputtered the other, "you knows you is!"

"What I mean," said I, "is——"

" ' Do you belong to Gideon's band? "

You do, don't you? "

The dark face grew radiant. "Yass, mist'ess, praise Gawd, I does!"

"Euonymus, how many more of you are there besides your daddy and mammy? "

The fugitive's eyes gave one gleam of alarm, and then filled with rapt amazement at my miraculous knowledge. "Be'—beside'—beside' d'—daddy an'—an' m'—mammy? De ain't no mo', m'—mist'ess; dass all; yass 'm."

"Just you four. Well, Euonymus, when your sister was crossing the road I noticed some white mud on her ankles."

"Yass, 'm." Again the gleam of alarm; but the awesome courage that displaced it was fine to see. Sarepta, contrariwise, first grinned, and then suddenly stared with panic.

"That mud is marl," I said, "and the only marl in the State is forty miles south of here."

"Is d'—dat so?" asked Euonymus.

"Yes, and so I judge that, like me, you, also, are travellers, are you not? "

"Trav'—ye'—yass, 'm, I—I reckon you mought call us tr'—travluz—in a manneh; yass, 'm."

"Well, the railroad station I am going to next is some thirty miles north of here——"

"Nawth; yass, 'm, nawth——"

"Now, if instead of hiring just Sarepta and your daddy, I should——"

"Yass, 'm," burst from Euonymus, and the eyes could hardly have shone more exaltedly had they seen heaven open.

"Suppose," continued I, "I should take all four of you along, *without* hire, just as my servants——"

"Faw de time bein'" slipped in the alert Euonymus.

"Certainly, just for the time being; how would that suit you?"

"Oh, mist'ess! Lawd, Lawd! it suit *us*; dey couldn' be nothin' mo' rep'ehensible!"

I waved a hand, and Sarepta vanished. Euonymus remained gazing into my eyes.

"What is it, boy?" I laughingly asked.

"May I ax you a secret?"

Had a brotherly care for Sarepta pierced my disguise? I wondered. "Why, yes," I replied, "you can ask it—if you promise not to tell."

"Oh, I'll keep it! Is, eh—is you a sho' 'nough 'oman?"

"No, Euonymus, no more than——"

"No mo' 'n you is a man! Oh, I knowed it! I knowed it!"—Arms warily uplifted, face in ecstasy—"I s'picioned it fum de fust!"

"Why, my good boy, what did you 'suspicion?' Who do you imagine I am?"

"Oh, I knows, I knows! 'T'uz me prayed Gawd to send you! Y'aint man, an' y'ain't 'oman; yo' de same what visit Ab'am, an' Moses, an' Dan'l, an' Ma'y de motheh o' de Lawd!"

"Stop! Euonymus, stop! Never mind who I am, or what; I've got to put you thirty miles from here before bedtime, and——"

"Yass, my Lawd."

"Euonymus! you mustn't call me that!"

"Ain't dat what Ab'am called you?"

"I don't remember! But you'd best call me mistress; understand?"

"Yass, suh—yass,'m!"

"Very good. Now, I can either take you alone, on horseback, which will be far easier, safer and surer, or——"

Once more a flash of alarm, and then a new and smiling exaltation. "Oh, no mist'ess, no, no! You knows you on'y a-temptin' dy hammaid!"

"You wouldn't leave daddy and mammy?"

"Oh, daddy kin stick to mammy, an' mammy to him! but Sarepta got nutheh gumption naw faith, an' let me neveh see de salvation o' de Lawd, ef I can't see it whilse I sticks by dat—by—by—by Sarepta!"

"Oh, that sounds very well, my boy, but suppose all five of us are together, and some fool should

mistake you four for—well, for runaways, and we should be tracked and chased; can you fight—for Sarepta?”

“Yass, my l’—yass, ’em; I kin, an’ I will!”

“Fight dogs?”

“Yass, ’m, dawgs. Yass, like de Bi-ible sa-ay’—
‘An’ mo’oveh de dawgs come past me roun’ about, but in de na-ame o’ de Lawd I will lif’ up my han’ an’ will pe’wail!’”

“Have you only your hands?”

“Dass all Da-avid had, my—mist’ess,—ag’in’ de lion an’ de bah, wa’n’t it?”

At this point came again Sarepta, stealthily conducting the parental pair. They were not in hanging rags, but the father was heroically patched. Both were attractive, the wife almost handsome, and the two showed forth in their bearing a high and gentle rectitude. It was droll, how wholly and immediately they confined one to a belief in them. Visibly, too, this sister and brother were, alike, their children. One had drawn all that was best from both parents; the other had borrowed and combined all that was poorest from earlier ancestors. One was a perfect example of upward development, the other of remote reversion.

Our first conference was brief. The father was clear-witted and deferential. His only pomp was in the way in which he called me madam; I almost believed I was a queen. I gave him a note to the stable-keeper.

"You can read, can you not? or your son can, can't he?"

"Euonymus? no, madam, I regrets to say d'ain't nair one of us kin do dat!"

I hid my pleasure. "Well, if, at the stable, they seem to have the impression that this note is from a gentleman, or that the coach is owned by a gentleman——"

"Stay still," put in Euonymus, emotionally, "an' see de counsel o' de Lawd overcome!"

"Exactly!" said I, in secret irony, and the messenger went. Then I penciled another note. It was to my landlady, and read—"Please make into a bundle, privately, and give to this black boy, the hat, boots and suit which you will find in the left-hand side of my armoire; and, for special reasons, please don't give him any information or ask him any questions."

The mother stood beside me and gazed anxiously after this second messenger, while, to my quiet disgust, Sarepta moved a few steps away to munch blackberries. I turned to the mother. "Did you ever think what you would do if your boy and your girl were in mortal danger at once?"

"Why, yass, 'm, I is study 'bout dat—at time'—ef de trufe got to be tole."

I thought to myself that if untruths should have to be told, Sarepta and I were the only ones who could be trusted to tell them. I lifted a finger commandingly. "I want you to promise me that, in

any pinch, you will try first and hardest to save your son."

"Yass, 'm."

"You promise me faithfully you will?"

Her whole frame went limp, and there came a glimmer of childish duplicity in her uplifted glance; yet with a firm voice she murmured again, "Yass, 'm, I promise you dat."

I pretended to be satisfied, but I knew well enough that whenever the tug should come on the mother's heartstrings she would instinctively spring first to the succour of the offspring least worth saving. A hum of voices told us the two anglers were drawing nearer, and the three of us stepped into hiding and watched them cross the road and pass out of sight down the creek. Then, seeing the coach coming, with both the father and Euonymus on the box, we walked up the road to meet them.

"You got the things?" I said to Euonymus, noticing a large paper parcel as the coach turned round. And then to the driver I added "That's a good boy of yours."

He bowed so devoutly that it was plain the belief of Euonymus had spread. "We thaynks de Lawd faw de boy an' gal alike," he responded, as, leaving him and Euonymus on the box, I assigned the mother and Sarepta to the seat before me inside the coach.

"Still," I persisted, "there would be no harm in an *extra* thanksgiving now and then for your son."

Sarepta smothered another sunbonnet giggle, and when the mother gave a stealthy touch of admonition, the priceless offspring belched a sob of laughter into the cushioned corner of the vehicle, and then, as we rolled away, turned and gaped at me with a face on which the livery-stable flies played tag unmolested.

Thus we went for a while, but before long I saw that the whole four, having journeyed all night, were heavy with sleep; so I had the mother move into the seat at my side, got Euonymus down into the coach, and made them and Sarepta take their rest without restraint. The few persons we met were mostly horsemen, to whom I took pains to show myself in completest feminine make-up, and some of whom I stopped and questioned, as our southern fashion is. And with what toothsome pop-overs I fed their rustic curiosity! I was a widow, from a hundred miles or more southward, who had sold her estate, except only these four servants, and was going to live with a brother bereft of his wife.

At the same time the belief in my heavenly origin and commission was visibly taken up by the mother. It was so natural for these simple hearts to accept the supernatural, that without the least strain on the faith of any save Sarepta, I could in one breath have posed as a woman divorced for guilty cause, and as one of the men who plucked Lot out of Sodom. And yet they could yield to slumber as help-

lessly, in the face of the miraculous, as ever did a like number of Galilean disciples.

When, at noon, at a farmhouse, we had eaten and had fed our beasts, Euonymus took the lines, and the father sat and slept inside. So for some five hours more; then the two changed places again, and my dark favourite and I sat face to face, with only now and then a word, but liking each other more and more while we watched the long white-hot day fail at last and pass by gorgeous changes into twilight. Many times I saw questions come into the young eyes that rested on me so reverently, but I gave them no glint of encouragement; I was afraid to attempt the part of a talkative angel. Besides, my brain was busy; how, without drawing suspicion upon the four fugitives, to get them once more separated from this equipage and from me, while I should vanish as a lady and re-appear as a gentleman—from nowhere—was a harrowing puzzle.

“Euonymus,” I said, as we came near a railroad town of maybe fifty houses, “if I should by and by take off these outside clothes and disguise myself as a man, could you put them on and appear as a lady, in my place?”

The reply came slowly. “Why, eh, yass, ’m; oh, yass, ’m, I kin putt on de clo’es, but you ’membah what de Good Book sa-ay ’bout de Ethiopium, dat he cayn’t shed his skin.”

"Yes, but this would be only for an hour or two, in the dark."

"It'd have to be pow'ful dahk," said Euonymus, with grave humility, and out of Sarepta's sunbonnet came a soft "unh!"

"Well," I responded, "maybe we won't do that;" and in fact we never did. I was still the lady as we came into the pretty little town. Everybody was at supper. Two or three gazers were all we met close at hand. Of one I asked if a young gentleman from the capital, a Mr. Southmayd, had come up on the train of half an hour before, inquiring for a lady with this sort of an outfit.

"Wha' 'd you say yo' own name was?" he asked, in turn.

"Mrs. Angell," I replied.

"No, madam, nobody stopped off'n that train, at all."

"He might come up on the half-past eight," another man suggested.

"I think not," was my weary reply; "he has credited me with too much speed, and has gone on to the next station. Five miles more of tired driving!" I sighed.

It was "more like six, by dirt road," I was told, and was modestly asked why I should not send three of my servants, and the carriage, with a pass, keeping only my maid (Sarepta), and wait for a train.

"Ah, no," I moaned, "I do not see how any lady

can allow herself to travel by rail where she can possibly go in her own carriage!"

So they let us pass on, but warned my driver against a few bad rods of temporary road at a point some two miles away, where the pike was being mended. We reached it, and at its far end—broke down.

"Pra-aise Gawd!" I heard the mother murmur to Euonymus, and wondered how far they saw into my scheme, into which I could hardly see, myself.

"De king-bolt gone clean in two!" said the father, as we grouped around him.

"No matter," I responded, and called him to me. "Let the coach stay where it is. Take the lap-ropes out of it and fold them on the backs of the horses, in place of saddles, one for me, the other for your wife. You and Sarepta and Euonymus will walk beside us; we are going straight on."

Presently our march began. At the end of a quarter of a mile we passed a large plantation house, its windows shining ruddily. A second quarter brought us to the farther edge of a piece of woods, where an old private road forked off, and here we paused.

"Euonymus, have you that bundle? Ah, yes." I turned to the father: "Now, Euonymus and I are going up this old road a step or two; I want to change my dress. If any one comes along asking questions, say we'll be back in a moment."

The old man looked painfully disconcerted.

“Yass, madam; but—er, eh—wouldn’ you fine it less amb’assin’ to yo’sel ef you took Sarepta, instid?”

“No,” I said, riding off, “as far as dress goes I shall be as much a man as your son, presently, and these things that I take off, Sarepta and her mother may divide them. Come, Euonymus.”

“Yass, ma—yass, suh;” said the father. “But in fac’, ef de trufe got to be tole——”

“The truth hasn’t got to be told. If I——”

“No, ’m, o’ co’se; I ’uz on’y gwine to say, ’bout Euonymus——”

I hurried away in the by-road, but not too swiftly to hear the wife chidingly say to her good man “Why you don’t hi-ide all dem thing’ in yo’ haht, same ez dey use’ to do in de Bi-ible time’, when de a-angel o’ de Lawd ’pear unto *dem*?”

When Euonymus and I reached the main road again I was in the blessed ease of male attire. At my word the wife and mother slid down from her horse and handed me his bridle. “Now,” I said to the group, “I am going back to return these beasts to their owner. We shall not see each other again——”

“Oh, Lawd! Oh, Lawd!” moaned the wife, and the husband interrupted——

“You means in dis vain worl’, good mawsteh; dass all you means, ain’t it?”

“Yes. You had better move on for a short way in the pike before you leave it. Good-bye.” I

turned abruptly and might have escaped their demonstrations had not my led horse hung back so meanly. All but the self-centred Sarepta sprang after me, pressed close, poured up their blessings, and, since I could give them neither hand, rained kisses on my very garments.

I was turning into the lane gate of the house we had just gone by, when I met one of the household, a lad of sixteen or so, about to enter from the other direction. "Yes," he said, "he was getting home from town and had just seen the disabled coach."

I told a story of having gone, by business appointment, with the lady who had but now abandoned that carriage, to the next railway station northward in order to meet her there; said I had come down the pike from there, on horseback, to see what might be delaying her; had met her a few rods from here up the road, mounted without a saddle and followed by her servants on foot, so eager had she been to push on to our appointment. Now, I concluded, our business, a law matter, was transacted, and she had gone on, on the horse I had been riding; I was going back with these two animals, which she, or I for her, had hired in the morning.

The youth was as gracious as could be. "Why, certainly, I will see, myself, that the coach is drawn up to the house, first thing in the morning, and—why, of course, you can let it stay as long as you

like! Why don't you stay all night, yourself, now? And why shouldn't you let me lope up the pike and bring the lady back to do the same?"

But I gave him reasons why he should not think of such a thing, thanked him cordially, went on back to the little town, put up at its one "hotel," told the same story there, and was soon sleeping the sleep of the truthful.

I awoke with a dim knowledge that the breakfast-bell had rung some time before, and that some one had just knocked softly on my door. I waited for a second knock, and then——

"Come in," said I, and in stepped my two state-house friends! Their good-morning and apologies were pleasant enough, but I saw they had not come thirty miles for nothing, and that their errand was grave. "Fact is," said one of them, "we're bothered about that client of yours; that lady."

I pretended to be amused. "'Pon my word! Not Mrs. Angell?"

"Yes; it looks as if——"

"Stop, let me get up, we can talk as I dress. 'Looks as if'—what?"

"Why, as if either she's not what you think she is, or else——"

"Pardon the interruption"—I smiled aggressively—"I don't *think* what she is, I *know*. Go on, please; 'or else'—you say——"

"Oh, no, I reckon I won't go on, you go on dressing. Are you sure those darkeys are hers?"

“Why, really, I—I never had the brass—did you say her darkeys, or her teeth? Why should you want to know?”

“Show him that thing,” said the one, and the other handed me a newspaper advertisement:

Two hundred dollars reward. Ran away on the fifth day of last June, from the plantation of the undersigned, in——County, of this State, the following slaves:

It gave the names and descriptions of four negroes stated to be father, mother, daughter and son. A reward of fifty dollars, it concluded, would be paid “to any person for the capture and imprisonment in any jail, of each or either of the above described.”

I returned it with a satirical laugh and went on dressing. “Oh,” said one of my friends, “we know that doesn't describe those four darkeys with the coach.”

“Naturally!” I retorted, “when they're not the darkeys meant to be described. Why, gentlemen,”—I faced around to them from the mirror as though my good-nature had suddenly given out, “if this isn't the most astounding——”

“Ho-old on, now, ho-old on! Make haste and finish your dressing; the description does fit two of the four; and so we rode on this morning as soon as it was light, to find your lady wherever she stopped last night, and see for ourselves.”

"Hm!" I remarked, with a venomous titter, "followed an unprotected lady?"

"We followed four runaway niggers, sir! Those scamps took to the woods before they'd gone a mile from that house where she left her carriage! Are you ready? Come on, we've already wasted too much time."

"Wait a moment," I said, moving for my pistol and belt and wasting all the time I could. "Now, gentlemen, of course we're going to follow this affair out to the end; but it has got to be done——"

"Oh, as quietly and privately as possible!" they rejoined.

"Yes," I silently thought, "you want the reward, and you want it all." I spoke aloud—"But, gentlemen, besides that, it's got to be understood that I know you're in error, and am going with you to help you prove that fact. Now, by your theory——"

"Oh, theory!"—they cursed theory and started away. I went with them, and killed as many minutes as I dared in securing a saddle and getting it put upon one of my hired horses. "You must excuse us, Southmayd, if we're not parlour polite," they generously apologised after another flash of impatience; "for though of course those niggers are not on the go now, in broad day, yet all this time their trail of last night is getting cold." As we ambled away—"You were going to ask us something," said one, "about our theory."

"Yes, but I don't need it now. I see you think

Mrs. Angell must have fallen in with agreeable company and ridden ahead with them, leaving the servants to follow on without her."

"Exactly. We couldn't pick out her horse's tracks from lots of others, but we saw no horse had left the road at any point where the darkeys' tracks left it."

"Come," said the other, pricking on, "Harby will be there before us."

Now, as far back as the town where we lived I had heard the fame of Harby. I reined in savagely. "Gentlemen, I swear this is too highhanded! Do you reckon I am going to let you run down those four innocent creatures with hounds? You shall not do it, sirs, I swear you shall not!"

"Why, the hell you say!" laughed one, and—"See here," said the other, "come on; we'll show you where those darkeys left the road one by one, and if you don't admit that they've counted on being followed and have used every trick known to a runaway nigger to throw us off, we'll never take the dogs out of leash; we'll just quit and go home. Does that suit you?"

"No, it does not!"

"Well, anyhow, come along; we pledge you fair play."

We passed the scene of the breakdown and then the house to which I had asked that the coach might be drawn. I caught a glimpse of the vehicle, in a stable door beyond the dwelling. Then a bend in

the pike brought to view a tall, slight man just descending from his horse among four black-and-brown bloodhounds coupled two-and-two by slim, pendent, iron breast-yokes. With a formidable whip and not the slightest frown he lashed one of them a quick cut over the wincing face, as the brute ventured to lift a voice as hollow and melodious as a bell.

"He's a puppy I'm breaking in," said he. "Now, here, you see,"—he pointed to the middle of the road—"here's where your friend met up with the lady and her niggers and given her his hoss and taken her two."

"This is the gentleman," said my companions.

The man barely gave me a glance. "Here," he resumed, "is the tracks of the two hosses goin' back. 'Tother critter's tracks—the lone hoss—I don't make out, but here's the tracks of the niggers, along here close to the bushes." He remounted.

"Yes," said one of my friends, "we know that. And yonder, up in that lock of the woods fence, by that tall stump covered with cross-vine, is where the first one went into the brush."

We trotted forward. The pike here lay between two high worm-fences. Beyond the one on the right was a cornfield; beyond the other a damp forest, whose margin was filled with a stubborn tangle of cane and briars. "Mind you——" I began, but one of my companions shut me off:—

"Yes, Mr. Harby," he called, "we must know,

dead sure, that they're runaways, before we put the dogs on."

"Not at all," he responded without turning his face, "we'll put on Charmer and Dandy, and they'll tell us whether we're chasin' runaways or not, befo' we've gone three hundred yards. If we ain't, I can call' em off so quick it'll turn 'em a somerset." He dismounted, and while removing the breast-yoke from the two older hounds spoke to them, with the fondling softness of a nurse, a few low words of gusto and incitement that put them into a dumb ecstasy.

"There's where one darkey went over," said the young man nearest me, pressing his horse up to mine and pointing among the fence-side weeds; "Now watch the dogs! See how quickly they'll get on to the trail."

As the pair sprang from their master's hands, one began to nose the air, the other the earth, to left, to right, and to cross each other's way in short, swift circuits. With a face utterly impassive, while assuming a voice of wildest eagerness, their master cried to them in a confiding stage-whisper "Niggah thah, Dandy!—Niggah thah, Charmer; take him, girl, ah, take him, my lady!"

Skimming the ground with hungry noses, the brutes responded to each cry with a single keen yap of preoccupied affirmation. Quickly Charmer found the spot which had just been pointed out to me, reared against the rails, and let out a new note, long,

musical, half tantalised, half overjoyed. Her master mounted the fence breast high, lifted the willing creature by the collar, and dropped her on the other side. There she instantly resumed her search; but just then her yokemate's deep bay trumpeted a few yards up the roadside. He had struck the broad, frank trail of the other three negroes. But the master lifted an ox-horn and blew a short, sharp recall, and at once the brute turned back and began his work again about our horses' feet.

The owner of the dogs remained on the fence, watching his favourite on the farther side. By the agitation of the low growth, now here, now there, we could see how busy she was, and every now and then she sent us, as if begging our patience, her eager, promissory yelp. Suddenly her master had a new thought. He stepped down to the right, passed the nearest lock of the fence, scrutinised the top rail, moved on by the next lock, examined the top rail as carefully again, then the next, the next, and at the seventh or eighth faced back to us and grimly said, "Come here."

We came. "See here? If any man doubts that's a runaway nigger, look here where he jumped."

"All I see," said I, "is that something's broken a splinter off that rail."

"What do you reckon done it," he asked, "a bird, or a fish? Look yondeh whah he landed in the briers and lit out." The merest fraction of a note from his horn brought the dogs, and before

he could help Dandy over the fence Charmer had started down the trail. She threw her head high into the air and for the first time filled the resounding timber with the bell-like music of her bay.

The master's incitements were no longer in whispers. "Dandy, Dandy!" he cried, with wild animation of voice from an emotionless face; "niggah-felleh thah, Dandy! Ah, Dandy, look him out!"

The music swelled from Dandy's throat, and away went the pair. The young dog of the other yoke answered, the whip of cool discipline cut him silent, and he and his mate trembled and moaned under the torment of their inaction. My two friends had thrown off three or four rails from a panel of the fence and, with Harby, were about to take their horses through, when the young brute just lashed, tugging his yokemate sidewise, let go a cry of discovery and began to dig furiously under a bottom rail. His master threw him aside and drew from under the rail "Mrs. Angell's" beflowered bonnet.

"Good God!" exclaimed the other two men as he held it up, and with a flush of rage one of them added "Southmayd, they've murdered her!"

"Nonsense!" I cried, "she's probably made it a present to one of them, and they've been afraid it would get them into trouble!" But the three horsemen had whirled away, and I could but follow. The baying had ceased, and an occasional short, half-smothered cry told that the scent of the bloodhounds

was for a moment baffled again; but as I came up, the brutes recovered the trail and sped on, once more breaking the still sunrise air, far and wide, into deep waves of splendid sound. Close after them silently scuttled the yoked pair, dragging each other this way and that, their broad ears almost sweeping the ground, while the man Harby, with sociable ease, told their pedigree as we rode just behind.

Presently we issued at the edge of wide fields about a plantation-house and its slave-quarters, and I hoped to find the trail broken once more; but without a pause the chase turned along the line of fence and proceeded to encircle the plantation, Harby explaining in clean-cut, nervy words, that our human quarry knew better than to cross a field at dead of night and set house-dogs a-barking.

From the plantation's farther bound we ran down a long gradual slope of lovely open woods, and at the bottom came upon a clear pebbly branch rippling between loamy perpendicular banks shrouded with strong vines. Here the scent had failed, and it was fine to see the docile faith and comprehension with which the panting dogs resigned the whole work, for the time, into their master's hands and followed beside him while he sought a crossing-place for his horse. To find this took a lapse of time that fretted my two friends; but by and by he scrambled over, bidding us wait where we were until the dogs should open again.

As he started downstream along the farther bank,

Charmer and Dandy, at a single word, ran circling out before him, electrified by his cold-eyed implorings. But now, to my joy, he found their most avid snufflings as futile as his own scrutinies and divinations, and after following the stream until my companions grumbled openly, he dropped a note from his horn, rode back with the four dogs, recrossed the rivulet, and passed again down it on our side, with the dogs at his heels, and a frown on his brow, scanning keenly the tangle of the opposite bank.

And now again he came back baffled. "You see, the branch runs so nigh the way they wanted to go, there's no tellin' how fur they taken the bed of it. They shore to have stucken to it till they all met together again. How fur that may be hell knows, the pike bends so to the east. Come on."

We plunged across after him and followed down the farther bank, and at the point where he had turned back he once more put on the two older hounds. "Must 'a' been at least two niggers went down this branch together," he began again, as it led us out into an old field. "At first this trail wa'n't much better 'n a fool's trail, now it's as smart a one as ever I struck—*look him out, Dandy!*—Every time they come to a swimmin'-hole they didn't come up on the bank and walk round it, they swum it—*ah, Charmer! yes, my sweet lady! take him! look him out!*—This sun's powerful hot for you indoor men."

All at once Charmer's baffled note changed to a glad peal, her mate's changed with it, and with the stream at their back and at ours, they were off and away in full cry. The trail was broad and strong now, and several times the dogs made us gallop. But now again they led us down into a thickety wet tract where a sluggish runlet, meandering widely, forced our hunter, after long hindrance, to leave the trail and seek and find it again on the rising ground beyond. Here we burst up into the cleared grove of a small, unpainted church, and I suddenly remembered it was the Sabbath. There was a saddle-horse tied to every swinging limb, and before the house's front a gang of big boys sprang up from their whittling to be our gleeful spectators.

The master of the dogs waved them off, as he had done all earlier on-lookers, with the word that we wanted neither help nor company, and though the trail, here much confused, took us closely around the sides of the building, we passed and were gone before the worshippers inside could more than finish the first stanza of a hymn. To hold his people on their benches the parson had started the first one he could think of, and as we swept under his open windows we could see, as well as hear, him, un-luckily bawling, with twice the throat of all the rest, one of the most familiar hymns in the South,—

“ ‘The track I see, and I'll pursue
The narrow way till Him I view.’ ”

All day we made no pause to eat or feed. "If we don't catch 'em befo' night, and they begin to go again," said Harby, "we shan't catch 'em befo' this time to-morrow," and we were then in the afternoon. About the middle of it one of the state-house men, who had been conferring privately with the other, turned back with a sudden "good-bye," and left us. The other explained that official duties compelled him to be at his desk early the next day.

"It's all right," he said, "*I* can keep on till we finish."

Happily for my longings he was mistaken. Two hours were hardly gone, when, as I was on the very point of telling him his horse was sick, he threw himself from the saddle in a small farm-road we happened to be crossing, and began wildly to un-girth, pouring out curses until the wood echoed with them. Harby rode straight on out of sight; I pulled up..

"You'll have to lead him to the first house and get another mount," I said.

"Another what!" he blazed at me. "I wouldn't leave this horse sick in strange hands for five hundred dollars!" Suddenly his eyes took on an imploring humility that filled me with pity and an unaccountable impulse to laugh. "Look here, Southmayd," he cried, "I'll give you fifty dollars, cash down, if you'll just stay with me till I get him out of here!"

I faced back as I trotted away after Harby,

shaking my head and trying not to smile. "A thousand dollars wouldn't hire me!" I cried, and passed from his view. But until I was beyond earshot I could hear him damning me in shouts, as a miscreant and a sneak, who ought to have had a coat of tar-and-feathers long ago, and would get it yet; and I was halfway of the same belief, until I overhauled the negro-chaser cheering on his dogs.

Their wary prey had again played them a trick, and once more the cry was "Take him, Dandy!" and "Hi! Charmer, my lady, look him out!"

Between shouts he asked me how *my* horse was bearing the strain; and when I said he would have to bear it or perish, he sealed his approval with a majestic oath. "So you believe they're runaways, after all, do you?" he said. I confessed I did, and on we pressed.

In time we found ourselves in a forest of great pines. The level beams of the low sun gilded the high green grass that stretched away on every side over the billowy, colonnaded ground. The very negro-chaser, with a wave of the arm, bade me mark the beauty of the scene. But the dogs were going more swiftly than ever, baying like fire-bells, and we had to gallop. "We've got the four devils on the run," he quietly called back to me; "they're up and going; but if we don't tree 'em befo' they make the river, we'll lose' em, yet."

The land began to sink, and soon we were in

thick underbrush once more. Presently we came squarely upon a high worm fence, where the air was fragrant with tall corn, which the fugitives had plunged straight through. Charmer and Dandy had climbed over into the field and out again on the farther side, and were waking every echo in the deepening swamp beyond, while the yoked pair stood under the fence, yelping for their master's aid. He sprang down and unyoked them, and over the fence they scrambled and were gone.

But the fence was staked and ridged, and for us it was easiest to struggle round it; which we had hardly done, when with sudden angry curses Harby spurred forward upon better ground. The two younger dogs had broken away from the wiser pair and were off on a chase of their own. At the river bank the four negroes had divided by twos and gone different ways, and the rear dogs had rushed down the stream in full cry, while up it bayed Charmer and Dandy. When we, in turn, came to the river, we burst out upon a broad, gentle bend up and down which we could see both heavily wooded banks for a furlong either way. The last beams of the sun shone up its course. In that direction we observed only the clear waters crinkling in a wide, sweeping shallow over a yellow gravel-bar; but as we glanced the other way we discovered two of the runaways, the married pair.

- They were more than half way over, yet waist deep in the main current, heaving forward with up-

lifted arms, and silhouetted against the sinking sun. On that moment, at twice their speed, two small dark objects moved out in their direction from the shore they had left, each spreading wide in its wake two long golden ripples. They were the pair of younger dogs. The unruly "puppy" was leading. His swearing master threw the horn to his lips and blew an imperious note. The rear dog turned his head and faltered in his course, but then followed on in the chase, from which the other had not wavered. Again the angry horn reëchoed from shore to shore, and the slower dog turned back; but the other swam straight on. The two slaves glanced behind them, and the wife's outcry of despair, and her terrified new haste, were pitiful to see and hear: but her husband turned about and, backing after her through the deep flood, prepared to meet the onset with naked hands. Harby sprang to his tiptoes in the stirrups, and his curses pealed across the waters. "If you hurt that dog I'll shoot you dead!"

He had whipped out his revolver, but a cry from me diverted him. "Look up yonder!"

Much farther from us than these, the other two runaways were out on the gravel-bar. Sarepta was the more conspicuous, splashing frantically across the wide shoal, tearing and kicking off sunbonnet, skirt, waist, petticoat, and howling with the horrified self-concern of constitutional cowardice. "Thank Heaven," thought I, "at any rate she's a swimmer, and will not drown her brother!" For certainly

only a swimmer ever cast off garments quite in that way.

Euonymus, too, was bareheaded, and swift of flight, but wholly without frenzy, agile, silent, and purposely behind Sarepta. Neither could see anything in our direction but the dazzling splendour of the sunset. And now Charmer and Dandy for a moment outwitted and delayed, bayed joyously once more and sprang into view, and Euonymus began to back away, facing the brutes. So nearly together in time were the two actions, downstream and up, that the brief echoes of Harby's horn had hardly died when with another fierce cry he sounded the note meant to recall all the four dogs.

Charmer and Dandy turned at once; but at the same moment the young dog below us launched himself at his adversary's throat, where the slave stood breast deep in the glassing current. The wife, who had reached shoaler water, turned and in self-oblivion stood still with wet arms uplifted and a wail on her lips. Her husband caught the dog's throat in both his hands and went under the flood with him.

Harby's oaths pealed. "You murderin' black fiend o' hell! I'll match you!" he screamed, and before I could lift a hand or a cry he had fired squarely at the woman. She seemed scarcely within the pistol's range, and he took the time of one quick breath to see if he had struck her; yet his last word was hardly out of his teeth, when his weapon

flew up for a second shot. Then at last my tardy hand reached him, and by good luck I knocked the revolver from his fingers. I took note of four things at once: the wife clapping a hand to her arm, where the first shot had struck her; her husband and the hound coming to the surface apart from each other; the lost weapon tumbling over and over as it curved out from the high bank and vanished in the river; and Harby's face, a thundercloud, that gulped his speechless wrath.

"Call your dog again," was all I could think to cry, "you can save him yet!" The brute had renewed his deep-water chase, and his prey again waited to grapple him.

More commandingly, more appealingly than ever, Harby winded his horn; the dividing ripples in the brave creature's wake began to curve, his muzzle came round, and he swam toward us. At the same time the others came about their master, while at the farther shore man and wife gave each other a supporting arm, scrambled up through the waterside bushes, and disappeared. Sarepta, too, had gained the bank; only Euonymus was to be seen, at the far edge of the gravel-bar. I was so inebriated with good fortune that I burst into a laugh, while exclaiming, with gestures of apology, "It shall be all right! I'll pay for the revolver!"

"You'll pay with your life!" yelled Harby. "If they don't hang you without a trial, I'll kill you, as sure as the devil's in hell!—*Charmer!*—*Dandy!*—

go! take the niggah! ah, take him, my lady!" We had both discovered that Euonymus feared to swim.

There stood the victim, alone, defenceless, cut off from flight by deep water, and here darted away the four dogs. Not an instant was there for second thought; I drew and fired, and one of the hounds, the mate of the refractory puppy, gave a yelp, and rolled over, dead.

"Call them back!" I yelled, brandishing my weapon in Harby's face as our horses bore us side by side after the other three dogs; but he only shrieked foul epithets upon me and cried, while the woods rang with the baying of the hounds, "*Take the niggah, Charmer, take him!*"

I swerved out of his reach and fired again. Poor Dandy! he sprang sharply from his course, howling in agony, and began to trot in a circle, with melting eyes fixed upon his master.

"Oh, God!" cried Harby, leaping down beside the wailing dog, that pushed its head into his bosom like a sick child; "oh, God! but you shall die for this!"

I felt he was more than half justified, but so was I, and as I looked back I cried once more, "Call them off! call them off, or I'll shoot them all!"

Harby was on his knees. One arm clasped the moaning brute to his breast, the other lifted the horn, and with streaming tears of love and rage he blew a recall. I spurred on. An opening in the tops of the shore underbrush revealed to me Euony-

mus, in deep water, quite spent after a few strokes at swimming. At the winding of the horn Charmer had quit the chase, but the young dog kept on. The current was swift where Euonymus had attempted it, and as I saw the dark head and struggling arms of the fugitive swept along by it, I strove, in vain, to crash down into the stream through vines, brush and out-leaning trees. Twice while I did so the drowning runaway called a name I had not previously heard among the four. But no answer came. "Catch the fallen tree below you!" I shouted.

The tree itself obeyed. It was a long slim buttonwood, from under which the current had cut away the bank. It hung almost prone over the water, and one fork of it, hidden beneath the flood, seized and held the exhausted form of Euonymus. The bloodhound had swum nearly to the spot, but taught by his earlier encounter, began to make half-circuits, baying as he swam. I dashed on upstream for the opening by which the slaves had gone down into the river.

While I went, the horn of the negro-chaser sounded again for the truant dog, and rang back from forest and stream, plaintive yet imperious. But when I burst out upon the gravelly shallow the dog was still in the deep water about the fallen tree, and the moment he saw me coming he plunged forward to the attack. Euonymus had struggled in along the level branches of the buttonwood, and was gaining the bank. A few steps up the river lay a

dozen yards or so of green open ground, burnt off by the spread of some night-fisherman's fire, and as the dog shot furiously into it, the flying Euonymus, near its middle, suddenly stood at bay, and presently dropped to one knee, crying "Sarepta! Sarepta, run! run, Sarepta, 'ever mine me! fo' de Lawd's sake, run!"

I wonder if science will ever tell us why a negro, to defend any other part of his frame, will always interpose his head. Has it become the natural motion of the slave, who may not strike? The head of Euonymus came down only at the last moment, yet it came with the quickness of instinct, and just in time to save the neck from the fangs of the hound, while in the same instant, both hands clutched the brute's throat. Had I dreamed they could keep their hold I should at once have swum my horse over the narrow flood between us; but already I was within easy pistol-shot, and leaping down into the water at the edge of the shallow I watched my chance to shoot the dog. But with the strength of despair the slave's grip held on. The ferocious beast bit his holder again and again on legs and on arms, but the hold did not loosen, and all at once Euonymus, straightening to full stature, lifted the dog until the beast could barely tiptoe the earth with one pair of feet. Only then did I realise the awful bulk of the brute.

"Right!" I cried; "right, my brave boy! lift him clear! oh, lift him clear of the ground!" For

I believed that the moment the animal felt the ground gone from under him he would be conquered. But now the overtaken Euonymus seemed able only to hold off his assailant's fiendish gnashings from throat and face.

"Turn him broadside!" I shouted, and all at once became aware that I had waded into the deepening water until it was above my waist. "Turn him! turn him broadside till I put a hole through him!"

But in heroic silence the young runaway fought on, and gave no sign of hearing me. Something caused me to glance back, and there came Harby. He was already out on the gravel-bar. The die was cast; I saw myself a hunted man, fallen, disgraced, a nigger-stealer, an exile, an outlaw, and I levelled my weapon. "Stand," I yelled, "or I'll shoot you, you vilest hound of the pack!"

He hauled in his horse and lifted the horn. I darted a glance back toward my fellow-runaway, and as I did so Euonymus heaved the dog from his feet, the horn rang, and with a howl of terror the brute writhed free, scampered to the water's edge, leaped in, and swam toward his master. I dragged myself into the saddle and took the deep water.

When I reached the scene of the combat only the front half of the fugitive's hickory-shirt was there, bloody and torn to rags; its wearer had vanished. I spurred to a gap in the bushes, and there, face down, lay Euonymus, insensible. I dropped to my

knees and turned the slender, limp form; and then, without taking time for one hand's turn to bring back its life, I whipped off my coat and laid it over the still, black bosom; for Euonymus was a girl.

Then I understood that the strange name she had called when in the terrors of drowning she had raised her one and only cry for human succour, was the true name of Sarepta, and that that strong swimmer was her brother. Before I could leave my knees her eyelids quivered; then they opened; for a moment the eyes were vacant, but in the next her bosom heaved, she saw me, her shapely hand sought the space beneath her throat where the shirt should have been buttoned, and finding there my coat, she turned face and breast once more to the sod, and moaned that name again: "Julius!"

"Come," I said, "we'll find Julius; rise up." I gave my hand, and she rose lightly, clutching the coat to her breast, but would have fallen again had I not steadied her.

"Whah's Julius? Oh, Lawdy! is dey cotch Julius?"

"No, they haven't caught any of us, although—"

"De Lawd's name be pra-aise'!"

"Put this coat on while I mount," said I, and she did so. "Now your hand again; you'd best sit woman-fashion—spring!"

She landed firmly on the horse's croup, and we sped into the darkening woods.

A blessed bit of fortune it turned out to be, my

so cruelly wounding Dandy instead of killing him outright. It kept his master from following hot-footed at our heels or galloping about the country side to get others to do so in his stead without waiting for daylight. I suppose he did not want any one else, instead of himself, to have the sweet comfort of killing me.

Hard by the nearest telegraph station I dropped the gentle Euonymus in a thicket of wild-plum, rode to the station "store", left my worn beast, and telegraphed the livery-stable man where to find him. Then I rejoined my fellow-runagate, and about ten that night on the bank of a creek, we found her father, mother and brother. The mother wept for joy at sight of Euonymus, and so mollified my private resentment against her for having kept her promise, to try hardest to save her son. Near the stream's farther shore, at a railroad water-tank, we stole into an empty car of a passing freight-train, and when, at close of the next day, hunger drove us out of it on a lonely siding at the edge of a forest, our late pursuers were two hundred miles behind us.

All that night we fled afoot. On the day following we lost Julius. In broad noon, with an overseer and his gang plainly in sight in an adjoining cornfield, his self-command crumbled away under the seductions of a melon-patch, and he howled away his freedom in the grip of a bear-trap set for such slaves of appetite as he. His father and

mother wept helplessly and laid their faces to the ground in prayer; his sister was frantic. To have seen her and not him, one might have thought him her own unweaned child. With all her superior sanity I doubt if she would have left the region could she have prevailed upon her parents to go on without her.

Here let me make an end; what pleasure is there in the history of a white man, a southerner born and bred, lying bush-hidden in the swamps day after day, and skulking through them by night, in the company and fellowship of three runaway negroes? True it is their story, not his, and it would be only fair to tell much more about their sweet, droll piety and the humble generosity of their minds and hearts. In the end we reached a northern State. Ah! it was no Canaan. Yet they were not cast down; no ancient Israelite ever looked forward to the coming of a political Messiah with more pious confidence than did they, still, look forward to a day when their whole dark race should be free and enjoy every right which any other race enjoys.

“Even the right to cross the two races?” I asked the father once, smiling him on, though with secret loathing.

“No, suh!” he replied, and his wife and daughter fairly jerked out a soft grunt of concurrence; “no, suh! de same Lawd what give ev’y man a wuck to do what he cayn’t do ef he ain’t dat man, give ev’y

race o men a wuck to do what dey cayn't do ef dey ain't dat ra-ace."

I fancy he had been years thinking that out into a conviction clear enough for speech.

"Still," I cunningly suggested, "races have crossed, and made new and better ones."

"I don't 'spute dat, suh; no, suh. But de Lawd ain't neveh gwine fo' to make a betteh race by crossin' one what already done all dat eveh yit been done, on to anotheh——"

Euonymus would not let him finish. "On to anotheh," she broke in, "what ain't neveh yit done nothin'!" And her mother breathed a long amen.

I kept the acquaintance and friendship of Euonymus for years. Indeed it was through her sweet and gentle log-rolling that I got my wife. But that was after the Civil War; into which I went, in spite of all, would you believe it?—on the southern side, and came out a Confederate brigadier.

* * * * *

"And now we've just time, before the clock tells twelve, to have our twelfth and last story," announced Mrs. Goddard, "and I want a real volunteer this time."

Absolute silence.

"Oh please!" begged the hostess, looking about.

A girl gave a little movement in her chair, and drew a deep breath. "I don't know," she began, and then halted and flushed.

"But we do," finished Harold, "and I'll be bound you'll give us the best one yet."

"Oh, no," denied the maiden, anxiously. "I only—I'm afraid I'll spoil it—but when I was a little girl my grandmother used to tell me a story of our family which she had found in an old paper—and I used to get her to repeat it again and again—and I thought perhaps that I could tell it to you, just as she used to tell it to me—for I heard it so often that if she changed a single word, I knew it."

"Good!" "Brava!" "That's just what we want," came a chorus.

"Then I'll try and tell it word for word, as she did. Grandmama called it 'THE RED OXEN OF BONVAL'." The girl drew a long breath and began:

RED OXEN OF BONVAL

“SO it is merely to these good beasts, then,” said Mademoiselle mockingly, “that I owe the honour of this visit from the much-occupied Captain Glenning! And I had been flattering myself! *Mais*—’tis ever so with us poor maids, Monsieur! We cannot be permitted to cherish our pretty delusions,—no, not even so long as that!” And she gave a daring little snip of her little brown thumb and slim forefinger. It was nothing so pronounced as a snap, of course; yet it was one of those things which only the right woman can do in the right way, and which are all wrong if wrong by a hair’s-breadth.

As she spoke, her small dark head to one side, she gazed at me straight in the eyes, laughingly, wickedly, in a manner that was both a challenge and an inhibition. It was indeed, a dare to all gallant protestation; but, at the same time, there was something which forbade that one should ever dream of taking up the little glove so recklessly thrown down.

This had ever been Jeanne de Bonval’s way, indeed, during those two brief weeks of the preceding winter which she had spent in Halifax, with half of the officers of the garrison sighing vainly at her small, disdainful feet. Not one of us but had been held always at tantalising distance, piqued by a sweet and dangerous raillery. If there were one for whom her wit assumed less keen an edge than was its wont,

that one, I thought, was myself; and I was not alone in this suspicion. Yet never, even with the courage of this thought in my heart, had I dared put things to the test, lest raw haste should bungle my hopes. Of love or wooing, or of aught more intimate than the ceremonious compliment, I had suffered not my lips to say one word, waiting till that aloof and imperious spirit which I felt, rather than saw, lurking behind her challenging audacity, should have been lulled to sleep.

Now, therefore, when she made sport of the business which had brought me to her home on the St. Croix, where she lived a remote yet busy life with her widowed and ailing mother, she had me, as of old, at her mercy. My unready wits and my most unready French held me silent, as of old; but I took heart to let my eyes speak with a plainness that could need no interpreter. For just an instant her own eyes softened and dropped, while a faint rose tinged the clear brown of her cheek. The one tiny foot, in its moccasin of whitened deerskin and dyed quill-work, tapped the floor nervously, and she met my gaze again with a look that carried the old inhibition with full force. Evidently she thought I was going to speak too boldly,—going to take the dare, and tell the truth which she knew was burning on my tongue,—for she spoke again hastily, yet in the same mocking, provocative vein.

“Oh, no truly,” she cried, shaking her head, and flashing her white teeth between her scarlet lips,

"I would not that one of you so honest English should do violence to his honesty by flattering a poor country maid. Yet our Frenchmen say nice things to us, and we know they do not mean them, and we are pleased all the same. They would say that they came to lay their devoted services at my feet and that the Governor's business was but an incident. Is it not so Monsieur? But you would not so flatter me. Oh, no; though you must know that I have no one here to make me compliments, except my dear, dear mother, who is nigh blind and cannot see me, and old Tamin, my overseer, who is equally blind because he loves me so. But, never mind,"—she went on, suddenly changing her tone, and speaking with reminiscence in her voice "it is pleasant to have a visitor from Halifax even if it be but the Governor's business that brings him. Let us then talk of the Governor's business, and the cattle."

"Indeed, Mademoiselle," I began, having had time to fashion my phrases in the unfamiliar tongue, "duty has but opened for me the door of desire, and now——"

"That is very nice!" she cried, clapping her hands and wickedly interrupting. "Now do I begin to believe that there still are kings and courts in the wide, far world, and stately dames, and minuets, and patches. I had begun to fear that I was, perhaps, after all, the peasant girl you seemed to think me," (she, with the blood of the de la Tours and the de Razillys in her veins!) or an Indian maid, in these

moccasins." And she half thrust out the little foot, and quickly drew it back beneath the white homespun petticoat. "What if all that gay life, the lights, and the glitter, and the music, and the dancing, and the courtly compliments that sound so pretty and mean so little, were just a dream, Monsieur! Sometimes I think it so, here alone on the farm, with just mother who forgets things now, and Tamin, and old Annette in the kitchen, and the chickens and the cows to talk to."

"The place which is blessed by your presence, Mademoiselle,—the life which has you to adorn it,—that place and that life, in court or in country, are the best," I answered fervently, emboldened by the seriousness of her concluding words. Then with hasty return of prudence I changed my tone. "The fact is I only reached Fort Piziquid this very noon. Scanting to the utmost such time as was needful for my toilet, I took a fresh horse and rode straight hither. I am sure that the Governor, though an impatient man himself, would have thought my haste much keener than any urgency in my business might seem to call for!"

"Ah, Monsieur," said she, with affected seriousness, "Believe me, you do not know what need there may be of haste in this matter of the cattle which your Governor is so solicitous to possess. You do not know what peril may threaten these good beasts, to which I am so indebted for the pleasure of this visit from Captain Glenning! But, Monsieur must

excuse me if I leave him for a few moments, while I go to tell my mother of his coming, and learn if she feels strong enough this afternoon to see him. Then, if it please you, we will consider more minutely this business of the Governor's!"

As she moved across the broad, dusky room, a gaunt white cat which I had not before observed dropped from a shelf and trotted after her like a dog. She herself went noiseless and smoothly, like a creature of the woods, with a motion singularly different from the formal and stately grace which had belonged to her in the ball rooms of Halifax. She flashed upon me one radiant yet half-flouting glance, and disappeared through a curtained door, while I stood staring after her, eyes and heart alike filled with the delectable vision.

If I had been in love with Jeanne de Bonval in Halifax, where she was altogether the *grande dame*, to every scrupulously calculated requirement of patch and powder and precision of ceremony, I was tenfold more in love with her now. Beautiful indeed had she seemed to me then, above all other women; but she was tenfold more beautiful now, from the dainty white-moccasined feet and slender ankles to the black, rebellious waves of her thick hair, whose strange iridescences of bronze and purple should never have been desecrated by powder, unless as a merciful provision that other women might not die of envy. One curl, not over long, came down beside her small, half-hidden ear, with an air

of having escaped the pins that should have held it. Her face, tanned to the clearest and most velvet brown, had that subtle modelling which only generations of fine breeding can confer,—and the like seal of her ancestors was to be discerned in her slim fingers with their rosy oval nails. But the resistless enchantment of her face appeared to dwell in her eyes and in her mouth,—eyes of alternate light and shadow, mystery and revelation,—mouth upon whose scarlet curves mirth and sadness came and went, childishness and womanliness replaced each other at a thought. She wore the short skirt of homespun linen most in use among the country girls of Acadia, but undyed, and bleached to a creamy whiteness, with white sleeves puffed at the shoulders, and a bodice of some soft blue stuff marvellously becoming. And my whole soul went out to her, kissing the places on the floor where the little moccasined feet had stepped. It is permitted, indeed, for the soul to do what in the body,—and especially a body six feet tall and broad in proportion,—might look ridiculous. But was it not, forsooth, almost ridiculous that I should stand in this way with my eyes glued to the door through which My Lady had disappeared? “Would this fetch her?” I asked myself, with a half laugh under my breath; and I turned to speed the moments by gazing out upon the fair prospect under the window.

A fair prospect indeed! The old manor house of the De Bonvals was on the sunward slope of the up-

lands, overlooking the rich dyke-meadows of the St. Croix stream. On either side were apple-orchards, hiding the barns and outbuildings; and one tall lombardy poplar, straight and stiff as a church steeple, stood guard at each side of the open space which led up to the front door. This open space was a garden, given over to currant bushes,—beds of pinks and marigolds, scarlet-lychnis and love-lies-bleeding, tangles of red and yellow roses, and thickets of tall blue larkspur. Along the foot of the garden a hedge of lilac shrubs; then the road; then the wide dykelands, level, golden green, and dotted with small red cattle pasturing on the aftermath. Beyond the winding lines of the dyke wound the river, now placid and golden at full tide, and then, at the other side of the tawny flood, more meadows, bordered by dark green hills of spruce and fir. A strong and sweet landscape this, I thought; tranquil, yet not tame, and visited by change twice daily, when the huge tides emptying themselves down past Piziquid and forth under the black front of Blomidon, left bare the gaping channels of copper red. So lovely a scene, and one set so deep in her love,—was there any hope that I should prevail with her to leave it for a home in the raw little city of Halifax, yet noisy with the hammers of the builders? Well, I was resolved,—and here I renewed my resolution,—that upon this visit I would put my fate to the test, if Mademoiselle's eyes would but for an instant refrain from routing my courage; and I blessed the

small red cattle there at their pasturing, that they had been the means of procuring to me this long craved opportunity. For all her raillery, Mademoiselle Jeanne must have well known how tied to my post I was at Halifax, how sorely I had been chafing at my fetters, and how only the urgent need of provisions for the garrison could induce the Governor to send me on so long a journey at a time when he had daily need of my services.

Noiseless, as I have said, were her feet, like a moth's wing in the twilight of the honeysuckles; but I felt her coming, and turned with leaping heart to find her at my shoulder.

"My mother," said she, "begs that you will stay and sup with us, Monsieur."

I bowed my glad assent, but before I could speak she went on in her quick way——

"And we have now just time to talk of this business of the Governor's upon which you are so zealous. He desires, you say, to purchase these good beasts of mine yonder, for the garrison?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle!" It was better I thought to get the business done with, and clean set aside, that she might have one weapon the less wherewith to put me off from weightier matters. "He bids me convey to you his profoundest consideration, and to express the hope that you will again honour Halifax with your presence this coming winter. He bids me say, also, that he knows how to value the friendliness of a de Bonval, and begs that you will ask him

a price something higher than the best that you could hope to obtain elsewhere!"

"But you, Monsieur," she answered, looking at me gravely, "you must surely know that it is not possible for me to sell provision to your garrison!"

Here it was again, the barrier that confronted us at every turn when dealing with the Acadians; and it moved me deeply to find that even Mademoiselle de Bonval was not an exception. At once I became the eager advocate of our cause, identifying it with my own private interest. Her refusal seemed to put her farther off, out of my reach, behind ambitions, sympathies, purposes which were alien and remote. In arguing the Governor's case I was indeed pleading my own.

"But, Mademoiselle, we have hoped so much from your friendship," I urged, too fervently for a mere matter of fat cattle. "Everywhere, the Acadians refuse to sell us the food which we have a right to purchase, offering the best prices for what we might take at our own price; and we have reason to know that all the time, in spite of the law against it and the risk of severe punishment, they are selling these same things which we so much need to our enemies at Louisbourg, and for a paltry price. But you, Mademoiselle,—we have hoped and believed that you were one of ourselves, and would set these poor *habitants* an example. Oh, surely you *are* one of us, are you not, Mademoiselle?"

She had listened with gravity in her great eyes,

but now the old mockery leapt into them, and she laughed, with her head on one side.

“How eloquent you can be, Monsieur, on a matter of business,—you who are wont to be so silent when I would hear pretty speeches!”

My face fell, as I realised how much in earnest I had been,—and seemingly on a mere question of fat cattle! My heart grew hot, and my face grew red at the thought. Then, of a sudden I understood my own fervour. Looking deep into her eyes I said:

“It was because I was jealous,—I am mad with jealousy, if you have interests and dreams which I cannot share, if you have any part in life that separates you from my love! And forgetting all about Kings, and Governors, and garrisons, I seized her hand and pressed it fiercely to my lips.”

On the instant, however, and before my lips could half realise their own ecstasy, the little hand was dexterously extricated. A slight flush crept into Mademoiselle’s face, and her eyes fell. She didn’t seem offended; but there was the faintest tinge of austerity in her voice—the old effective inhibition,—as she said:

“I can honestly commend your zeal to the Governor, Monsieur. And as for this friendship of mine, which you would make so important that the Governor should give heed to it, indeed, Monsieur, insignificant as it is, it is loyal. I *am* English at heart. When we de Bonvals swore allegiance to the English Throne we did it with our hearts as well as with our

lips. And most gladly, now, would I meet the demand of your Governor. But surely you must understand that I cannot—*because I dare not!*”

“Dare not?” I cried, with amazed indignation that any one should have power to coerce or make her afraid.

“Can you keep a garrison here at Bonval?” she asked. “Shall I show my loyalty by letting this house of my fathers be burned down, over the head of my sick mother?”

I was thunderstruck. I could not have believed that any peril was imminent to her from our enemies; here on the St. Croix within five miles of the Piziquid fort. Yet I knew well enough that these were no idle words of hers. Her sincerity was above question; and she was not the stuff of which hysterical alarmists are fashioned. But before I could make question of the danger I was favoured by fortune with a most unexpected enlightening. “But, Mademoiselle,”—I was beginning to stammer, when old Tamin, her factor, came in hastily, following upon his knock before she had time to bid him enter.

“Your pardon,” he cried, hat in hand and bowing low, but Father La Garne and some of his red flock are close at hand. It were well that Monsieur the Englishman were hidden at once. I have buried his saddle in the hay and turned his horse out to pasture!”

So this was the notorious partisan priest, La

Garne, condemned by his church, feared by the Acadians, hated by us English with a fiery hate, who came now so inopportunately to spoil my wooing! Hide from him and his crew? My blood boiled, as I laid hands on the pistols in my belt.

"Hide from those vermin?" I exclaimed. Then I saw that Mademoiselle's face had gone white to the lips; and I hesitated. "You must, indeed you must," she cried, seizing me by the arm and trying to lead me toward a small door in a corner of the room. "They will be too many. You will be killed—and—scalped."

I felt her trembling. But I refused to obey her.

"I have my weapons!" I protested obstinately. "Would you have me leave you unprotected?"

She stopped and became suddenly calm.

"I am in no danger,—unless from your presence!" she said firmly. "Will you do as I wish? Or will you force me to see you murdered before my eyes?" Then her calm forsook her again—"Oh, madness! *Are* you mad?" she cried wildly. "Don't you love me? Come! Come!"

"I love you" said I quietly, following her to the door. She opened it. I stepped into the scented darkness of a closet, where soft, feminine stuffs hung on pegs. She closed the door, and I heard her turn the key. What did I care whether hiding was dignified or not? She had shown her heart in that swift and desperate moment, and I was drunk with happiness. Yes, indeed, I would hide as stealthily as a

wood-mouse, if she wished it. That there might be no risk of noise from my heavy boots, I lay down on a heap of furs, close to the door,—and found that I could see out into the room through a crack in the panelling just on a level with my eyes.

Barely had I disposed myself so as best to use this advantage, when I heard a man's voice, strong and hoarse, at the other side of the room, and then the low music of Mademoiselle Jeanne's welcome. But they were too far off for me to catch anything that was said. Presently, however, they drew nearer to my hiding-place, and their words reached my ear with a distinctness almost startling. I understood this to be a piece of My Lady's strategy, that I might be entertained, and informed, in my prison; and I blessed her for it.

"I am advised, my Daughter," La Garne's harsh voice was saying, "that your husbandry has greatly prospered this year."

"The saints, have, indeed, favoured me far beyond my poor deserts," answered Mademoiselle in deferential tones.

"You have grain in garner, beyond your necessities, I am told; and fatted oxen, ready for market, is it not so?"

"My barley is not yet threshed, Father," was the respectful reply. "(Scarce did I recognise my imperious mistress in this attitude of strange humility.)
"And I have ten arpents of buckwheat on the up-

lands, not yet ripe for the sickle. As for my oxen, they are what you see yonder on the aftermath,—not large, but well nourished.”

“It is touching them that I would speak with you, my daughter. Beyond admonishing you that you hold faithful to the cause of France, who will yet return to her own, and rule once more over all this land of Acadia now groaning under the English usurper,—beyond admonishing you thus, which is doubtless unnecessary, I have no time for the civilities of my more fortunate and more courtly brethren. Yet, it is perhaps given me to serve the cause of France in no common manner!” (Here there came into his voice a note of fanatical zeal, and I felt that the fellow, however bloody, was sincere.) “Verily, my Daughter, these weak and self-seeking people, these Acadians, had long ago yielded their heavy necks to the English yoke, but for me!”

“I have observed, indeed, Father,” answered Mademoiselle, sweetly humouring this outburst, “that your power is very great among our people.”

“Not my power, my Daughter, not mine,” he protested, in a tone somewhat perfunctory, “but the power of the Cause I serve. But enough of myself, and more of my business here! These cattle are much needed by our garrison at Louisbourg. I will buy them of you, at a fair price, and bring or send you the money in full payment within one month from to-day.”

He paused for a reply, but Mademoiselle was silent.

"You will have the beasts driven up to the ford to-morrow, about this hour," he continued, "and there I will give your man a written acknowledgment of receipt. Why do you not reply, my Daughter?"

I noticed that a sharpness was creeping into his voice.

"It is not altogether easy to reply, Father." Answered Mademoiselle very gently. "You see, there are several points that have to be considered."

"For instance!" His words were curt and hard.

"Well, Father, for one thing the English are very anxious to purchase these same——"

But she was cut short. "Let me tell you, Jeanne de Bonval," he interrupted, a sudden cold fury in his voice, "though the English were to give you their weight in silver for the beasts, you would find it a costly bargain. I warn you, you are under suspicion of leaning to these usurpers. I know of your merry-makings last winter, your dancings and your mummeries with the enemies of your church and your king. You are watched, girl. If you let the flatteries of vain fools mislead you, and the greed of gold tempt you to sell support to the foes of France and God, then—your fate be upon your own head!"

I ground my teeth with rage, having to lie silent

and let his insolence go unchastised. But My Lady was no longer meek.

"You presume too far upon your cloth, Monsieur La Garne," she said, and I could see that she drew up her small figure right haughtily. "And I must beg you to remember that I have not expressed any intention of trafficking with the English. As for my private affairs in Halifax, they are a matter between myself and my own Father Confessor, the Curé of Piziquid, who has, I believe, the respect of his brother priests and the confidence of his bishop."

This was a sharp thrust, and I rubbed my hands over it. It was well known through all Acadia that the Bishop of Quebec tolerated La Garne only under urgent persuasion of the Governor of New France.

"I am not here to bandy words with a woman," said La Garne. "Nor do I care to resent an insolence toward myself. I serve France; and treason toward her I will punish. Do you send these cattle to the upper ford to-morrow? Or do you sell them to the English?"

"I was going on to say," replied Mademoiselle coldly, "that you ask what would mean our ruin. You know the law, and to what I render myself liable if I am detected in selling supplies to the French at Louisbourg?"

Now La Garne was a true partisan. He promptly forgot all personal consideration in his zeal to secure an advantage to his cause.

"There need be no difficulty," he cried. "You

will never be suspected. At this distance from the fort there is no danger of your being seen, none whatever. You are too timorous,—or your heart as I have said, is with the English. But I wish you no harm, if you obey. I will judge you by your works, and leave your motives to your own conscience. Send the cattle after nightfall, if you think that safer. I will wait till one hour after moonrise.”

“I will not so compromise myself, Monsieur La Garne,” she answered. “If it is so safe, as you say, then send your own men for the cattle, at the first dark and take them. And I will send my man Tamin into Piziquid in the afternoon, that no blame or suspicion may rest on him. The English are very bitter on this business of supplies going to Louisbourg, and they wait to make a conspicuous example of some one!”

“Well” assented La Garne, somewhat impatiently, “so that I get the beasts, I am content. As well here as at the ford, if it suits you the better so. I shall come myself. Good-night!”

I could see him from the girdled waist to the feet. He turned on his heel and strode toward the door.

But, boor though he was, Mademoiselle did not forget her courtesy toward his calling.

“I pray you, Father stay and rest, and sup with us!” she said, as gently as if this interview had been all sunshine.

“No,” he snapped. “I have a duty to perform this night at the Forks of Piziquid.

"Is it, then, as urgent?" she asked, knowing she might safely press, he being obstinate.

"I have to give these *habitants* a conspicuous example" he answered grimly. "There is one fellow over there who holds that the English are the true lords of Acadia, and entitled to his allegiance. He has been selling barley and flax to the Governor at Halifax!"

"Oh!" cried Mademoiselle, with a nicely modulated reprobation in her voice. I could imagine the subtle play of eyes and mouth that accompanied it. "And what will you do to the poor wretch?"

"Before the rising of to-morrow's sun, my Daughter," answered the priest, with slow significance, "his house will be ashes, and his children homeless,—but not fatherless, I trust, though my wild red flock are sometimes over impetuous in their zeal, and apt to go beyond my exact instructions. Farewell, Jeanne de Bonval; and that you may fare well, remember!"

The door closed smartly behind him, and Mademoiselle stood silent for a long time, watching from the window to be sure of his departure. At last she gave a little exclamation of relief. She came to the closet; I heard the key turn; the door opened. I caught the hem of her skirt and pressed it to my lips.

She drew back instantly beyond my reach. There was that in her small, determined face which forbade my wooing.

"You heard what he said, Monsieur?" she asked.

"Every word, I think," said I.

"And, of course, that is sufficient answer to the request of your Governor! You will acquit me of disloyalty, I think, if my good beasts find their way to Louisbourg instead of Halifax!"

"I will answer for your loyalty with my life, whatever happens," I cried fervently. Then, with a violent effort, I remembered my duty to the Governor. "But—oh, this business!—why cannot I come to-morrow and take the cattle by force, paying you afterwards?"

She laughed as if she really enjoyed my predicament.

"That would be oppression, sheer tyranny!" she retorted. "You know you dare not do it,—because you dare not explain to the Acadians! It would undo the forbearance of all these years, and drive them by thousands back into the arms of France! Think what the amiable La Garne would make of it!"

"But if you sell them to Louisbourg, I have the right to confiscate them, have I not? None could complain of that," I persisted.

"And how are you supposed to know? And after, how escape confiscating all my possessions? It seems, I am between the upper and the nether millstone, Monsieur," she answered mockingly.

"Stay, I have a plan,—one that will fully protect you," said I, thinking as swiftly and lucidly as I

could with those bewildering eyes searching my face. "And I can make it all right with the Governor."

Her face grew grave; and I realised with a very inward storm of love and wonder, the weight of the responsibilities which this lonely girl was carrying under so brave and gay a guise.

"You appreciate the ruin that hangs over us, Monsieur?" she asked. "You are sure, beyond a doubt, that it will not lay us open to the fate you know of?"

"It is perfectly safe," I answered triumphantly. "Not a soul can even suspect except the Governor, and he will know all about it! Just at dark to-morrow night, was it not, that scoundrel said he would come and get the cattle?"

"Just at dark. And he is a man of his word," she added, significantly.

"It is the simplest thing in the world," I exclaimed. "But—perhaps I had better not tell it to you!"

"The priest must not be harmed, Monsieur," she said in a low voice. "And he must not be captured. You must not touch me with any taint of treachery!"

"You can trust me surely for that!" said I. "Your honour is more dear to me than life." And then it came over me, just how deeply and fully she *was* trusting me,—trusting me blindly, when everything she had, and her mother's life, and her own, were at stake. She must have seen in my eyes the

irresistible flood of love and longing that surged up in my heart, for she took two or three steps toward the door.

"Oh, Jeanne," I cried out, "Beloved one, you know how long I have loved you. You know how I worship you. Let me protect you. Give me the right to protect you, to protect and care for your mother, to shelter you from all these fears and perils."

But she was merciless! She was rightly sure of me, so, womanlike, she could not but play with me! There was no severity, but the old mockery, in her eyes, as she withdrew to a yet safer distance.

"But why should I need protection, Monsieur," she asked, wilfully. "Have you not assured me that your plan is perfect,—and have I not believed you?"

I was at her side before she could reach the door. But——

"Here is Annette coming," she exclaimed, with timely strategy, "to tell us that supper is served and that my mother awaits you!" And she laughed into my eyes, with daring little face upturned. It was, indeed, an inauspicious moment for my wooing,—for the door opened. I could have killed Annette,—yet as I followed My Lady to the supper room I was not really vexed at any one in the whole wide world, not even at La Garne.

At supper and after, I had no word more alone with Mademoiselle. I devoted myself to the not uncongenial duty of making myself *persona grata*

to Madame de Bonval, a wizened little invalid who leaned like a child upon her daughter's judgment in all things. The old lady was very gracious to me,—but she was present, and obviously for the evening; and though half blind, she was very far from deaf. When I could not in decency prolong my stay by so much as another minute, I made my adieux,—and My Lady met my adoring look with laughter in the green deeps of her eyes. Her lips,—very subtly both allured and denied, by the smile on their distracting curves; and I went away in a madness that made that ride back to Piziquid in the moonlight, beside the gleaming current of the St. Croix, seem swifter and more elusive than music heard in dreams.

Being arrived at the fort, on its fair green hill overlooking the junction of the Piziquid and the St. Croix, I pulled myself out of my dreams and sought an interview with the Commandant. Armed as I was with the Governor's authority to levy upon the garrison for such help as I should need, it was not incumbent upon me to lay bare the whole matter; but I told the Commandant enough to satisfy him, and he entered into the business with right good will. Of Mademoiselle's very delicate and dangerous part in it I told him not at all. Being a coarse-grained fellow, his attempted civilities had met with a somewhat chilly reception at the de Bonval manor; and I fancied that he was not ill-pleased to think that

the matter promised some danger to the haughty little lady who had so effectually discouraged him.

Early the following morning, when the tide was at flood, I took twenty men, and had some fishermen of the village row us over to the east shore of the St. Croix. This made it tolerably safe that none should guess our destination. I marched them up the river, but far back from the valley, out of sight and earshot; and we lay some hours about midday in the thick woods surrounding the Upper Ford. In the afternoon we crossed the stream, and moved cautiously down till we were within view of the manor-house, taking advantage of every grove and thicket, and crawling on our bellies through the grass whenever obliged to cross the open. This method of travel was most exceeding irksome to my men, a fact which I noted with satisfaction. I had, indeed, been at pains to choose men but lately out from England, men not yet experienced in the subtleties of border warfare, who would not think the matter had been bungled if there chanced to be no shooting. I was resolved that Mademoiselle should have nothing on her conscience through any heedlessness of mine; but had I brought with me certain border veterans whom I had noted at the fort,—Indian fighters, Indian haters,—I should have been hard put to it to keep the de Bonval threshold clean of blood.

A little back from the road, and commanding a

clear view of all approaches to the manor-house, there was a thicket of blackberry canes and tangled clematis in the centre of a sloping buckwheat field. Into the heart of this thicket, slowly, stealthily as lizards, we wormed our way, and, at length, lay hidden beyond suspicion of friend or foe.

It was pleasant waiting in the blackberry thicket, the golden sun of late summer sifting through the leaves, sweet with wholesome country smells. A few late-flowering weeds amid the tangle drew about us the music of foraging bees. The men were highly content, some dozing, some smoking, some dreaming of far-off sweethearts. I lay and peered through the stems, looking down upon the house that held my love. I saw old Tamin go and gather all the red cattle, from end to end of the meadows. Some half score,—cows and young heifers I guessed,—he drove to another pasture, back of the barns. The rest he herded into a small enclosure near the house, handy for purchase or for pillage. Then he bent his steps toward Piziquid, and disappeared beyond the furthest winding of the way. At last, just before sundown, my eyes were greatly favoured. I saw My Lady,—so slight and precious a figure in her little cream-white gown and blue bodice,—come forth into the barnyard with a basket on her arm and the white cat following at her skirt. With noisy cacklings the fowls scurried from every side to throng about her. The sounds came to us very clearly. Four white doves, also flew down from a

gable, circled, and alighted on her shoulders. She threw grain in handfuls among the fowls, and gave some special dainty from her pocket to the doves, who crowded each other for the privilege of getting close against her face. At length she shook out the last grains from the basket, and moved slowly back to the house. As she neared the door the doves suddenly flew away, and dropped among the fowls to secure their portion of the grain.

As the dusk began to gather,—first rosy golden, then lilac, then brown-purple,—I set watches at each corner of our thicket. When it was as dark as it was like to be,—the sky clear, moonrise not far off, and no mist obscuring the crisp air,—the suspense began to grow keen.

Presently I saw a line of skulking shadows stealing down the road, a tall straight figure marching fearlessly at their head. As they neared the house their leader,—La Garne, plain enough,—left them and went up to the door, while his followers glided toward the enclosure holding the cattle. Soon there was a commotion in the herd. Then some bars were let down, clattering sharply. Then the door of the manor-house closed with a bang, and lights appeared in the windows of the big reception room. The time for action had come.

“Remember, men,” said I, “there’s to be no shooting. In the dusk some innocent folk of the household might be hit. The cold steel’s the medicine for these red rascals. Now, silence.’”

The men were delighted. They knew right well that marksmanship especially when the target was a drifting shadow among shadows, was not their forte. But the steel they could handle,—and in their innocence they expected to get close enough to an Indian to try its effect upon him!

Noiselessly I led them down to the road, that it might seem to La Garne we had been following on his trail. As we gained it, the cattle came pushing out of the enclosure. Still crouching low, and stepping softly, we ran along the soft grass by the roadside, and I began to fear lest we should actually come hand to hand with the savages, so busy and so careless did they seem. But just as I was thinking how best to give the alarm there was a flash from the lilac hedge, a musket shot rang out, and a ball sang low over my head. That was all right, but it would not do to wait for more such messages. "Charge"! I shouted, and we bore down upon them at full run.

But the gliding figures melted away before us. No more shots were fired. No one stood to test my men's cold steel. The men were amazed. Then a pale light began to spread over the landscape. The moon was rising.

"Post sentries, Cunliffe," I said to my sergeant, "and keep a sharp lookout. You never know what these devils are up to!" Then with an orderly at my heels, I went up to the door of the manor-house and knocked imperatively. The door was opened

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promptly by Annette, who was doubtless much astonished when I pushed past her and presented myself unannounced in the reception room.

Mademoiselle stood in the middle of the floor, awaiting me. How beautiful she looked. Her eyes were like stars, and the old mocking smile curved her lips,—but her cheeks were flushed, and behind the play I felt a terrible anxiety. It was hard to remember my part. I longed to throw myself at her feet. But I held my head high, and eyed her austerely.

“You are welcome, Monsieur,” she said,—and at the same time she cast a meaning glance at the door of the closet which yesterday had been my hiding place. Instantly I realised that La Garne was there. The situation was absolutely theatrical, and for one brief second my thought flashed back to London nights and the footlights of Drury Lane. Then I took my cue.

“I fear I must seem uncivil, Mademoiselle de Bonval,” said I, bowing low but ignoring her outstretched hand. “But *perhaps* you can explain!”

“What do you mean, Monsieur?” she asked in surprise. “Is it not rather I who need an explanation? I hear muskets at this quiet place,—and English cheers,—and a great trampling of feet. And then you rush in upon me, and look—so strange!”

“Mademioselle,” said I firmly, “believe me, nothing is further from my wish than that you should be

found a trespasser against our very necessary laws. But the case looks bad. Yesterday you refused to sell me your cattle, which are much needed by our soldiers at Halifax, though I offered a handsome price for them. And I cannot say your reasons quite contented me. To-night, while following the trail of some of those pestilent savages who, under that frocked scoundrel La Garne, make so much trouble for us in Acadia, I find that their destination is the manor-house of Bonval. I catch them in the act of driving off, openly, the very cattle which you so inexplicably refused to sell to me. Of course, I understand quite well that La Garne and his red minions are but the tools of Louisbourg. You know the penalty, Mademoiselle, for selling supplies to Louisbourg?"

Such words to her! I felt as if they blistered my mouth. But she gave me a swift commending glance, then drew herself up with fine scorn.

"And so, Monsieur," she exclaimed witheringly, "you would impeach me for treason, because I am robbed of my goods. Because the Indians come by night and steal my cattle, you would confiscate my estate, and exile me from my native land. Is this English justice? If so, it will no doubt commend itself to the people of Acadia!"

"But yesterday," I replied, in the voice of a judge, "these cattle were roaming the marshes. To-night I find them shut up in a paddock by the house, most convenient for a purchaser."

"As for that, it is the business of my overseer" she answered carelessly. "How should I know why at times he leaves them loose, and at times drives them at night into the paddock. Perhaps he is going to mark them, who knows. He is to-night at Piziquid; but when he returns he will be able to satisfy you."

"I am most glad, Mademoiselle, that you have a defense so plausible," said I gravely. "It is not for me, however, to say whether the Governor will hold it sufficient, or not. I earnestly hope he may. My own present duty is clear. I will take these cattle, which were about to go to our enemies. They are contraband of war, fairly. But I will give you a receipt for them; and if they are unlawfully taken, without doubt you will be more than compensated for the injury. The Acadians shall have no cause to complain of English justice; but they must not be allowed to think that English forbearance is mere childish credulity, to be imposed upon at every turn."

To my surprise, Mademoiselle's tone became suddenly quite gracious.

"I owe you a debt of gratitude Monsieur," she cried gaily, "even though you have been so rude and suspicious. There are paper and pens. Please write out the receipt." And she motioned me to an open escritoire.

"Gratitude?" I asked. "And for what, pray?" Mindful of her anxiety, I kept my voice stern and unrelenting.

"You have saved my cattle from the thieving Indians," she exclaimed. "I know the Governor will compensate me, will pay me my full price for them, when I explain the circumstances to him."

"You are sanguine" said I, handing her the paper. "I trust you may not be disappointed. And now, I have the honour to wish you good night, and to hope that I have not incommoded you by this abrupt incursion!"

As I bent low over her hand I turned her so that she stood exactly between me and the cupboard door, where I knew that a pair of lynx eyes watched us piercingly. Then I pressed my lips passionately to the fingers, and whispered "To-morrow, my love, my Heart, I shall come again, and implore an answer of thee."

But to my surprise she followed me to the door, and into the hallway, beyond scope of the lynx-eyes in the cupboard. I saw that her face was white now, the gaiety, the mockery, all gone. Her lips trembled like a child's. I would have snatched her to my heart,—but Annette stood there, watching me with disapproval, waiting to open the door.

"Till to-morrow, then," I murmured, again lifting her hand to my lips. But this time her little fingers clung. My heart thrilled and leaped wildly.

"Don't go," she panted, almost with a sob. "I am afraid. After you go, they will come back. He suspects. He sees through it all,—I know he does. He is so cunning. Oh—I think I do need your

protection. You *may* protect—my mother!” And she lifted her face to me suddenly, tears were in her eyes, but a smile upon her mouth.

“Beloved!” said I, and gathered her to my heart. “My Lady! My Beautiful Own!” And as I kissed her, I had a vision of Annette, silently and discreetly removing herself from the scene. A moment more and My Lady untwined my arms, and placed them firmly, decisively, at my sides. She put both her hands behind my neck, pulled down my head, and kissed me on both eyes. Then she sprang back beyond my reach, and laughed as if she had not a care in the world. How bright, indeed, did this same old worn world look! I laughed too, in sheer joy. Then I thought of the prisoner in the closet.

“What wilt thou do with him, My Lady?” I whispered.

She came back, into my arms, that she might the more conveniently reply.

“I will get him away safe in the night,” she whispered, “If you will remove the sentry from the kitchen entrance.” I nodded my head. “But first, as the price of his freedom, I will make him swear that de Bonval shall not be harmed. He lays so many traps for others, it is time he felt a little pinch himself. And he will keep his oath.”

As the story teller ended, Mrs. Goddard made a sign to her husband, who obediently reached out and touched a bell, even as the tall clock began striking the midnight hour. Before the last stroke

had sounded, the door was opened and two tray-laden servants entered. At once the group about the fireplace dissolved, and after due poppings of soda bottles, and glug-glugings of the decanters, every one was furnished with the nightcap of his or her whim. While the drinks were being chatted and laughed over, suddenly a loud exclamation from one side of the room made every one turn to see its cause.

“Peoples!” excitedly cried the last story teller, now standing between the curtains of a window, “The moon and stars are shining!”

Drinks forgotten, there was a mad rush to every window in the room, and then a shout of joy from all sides.

The old general alone had not stirred, and he stood, glass in hand, close to the long awaited trays.

“I don’t see anything to wonder at,” he muttered, “for I’ll venture to say that if Noah could have got hold of twelve equally dry stories, he need never have taken the trouble to build the ark.”

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
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